

**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB /REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023 AT 16:00**

**Present**

Councillor W J Kendall – Chairperson

H T Bennett	A R Berrow	F D Bletsoe	S J Bletsoe
JPD Blundell	E L P Caparros	N Clarke	HJ David
C L C Davies	P Davies	S Easterbrook	N Farr
P Ford	J Gebbie	W R Goode	H Griffiths
S J Griffiths	D T Harrison	M L Hughes	D M Hughes
RM James	P W Jenkins	M R John	M Jones
MJ Kearn	T Wood	J Llewellyn-Hopkins	RL Penhale-Thomas
J E Pratt	E Richards	R J Smith	JC Spanswick
I M Spiller	T Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	G Walter
A Wathan	A Williams	AJ Williams	HM Williams
I Williams	MJ Williams	R Williams	E D Winstanley

**Officers:**

Nicola Echanis	Head of Education & Family Support
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer – Committees
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director – Communities
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Alex Rawlin	Corporate Policy & Public Affairs Manager
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

151. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RJ Collins, C Davies, M J Evans, RM Granville and M Lewis

152. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Elaine Winstanley declared a personal interest in the “Capital Programme Update Quarter 1 2023-24” report and the “Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2023-24 and Performance Framework” as she was employed by Awen Cultural Trust who managed the Grand Pavilion, Bryngarw House and Maesteg Town Hall.

Cllr Heidi Bennett declared a prejudicial interest in “Proposals for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements following the transition to a single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg” as she was a Member of PSB on behalf of her employer BAVO.

## COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023

In relation to agenda item 11, "To receive the following Questions":

Cllr Richard Williams declared a personal interest as he was a member of Coity Wallia Board of Conservators and a Pencoed TC Member.

Cllr Elaine Winstanley declared a prejudicial interest as she was the responsible person for two BCBC buildings which were managed by Awen Cultural Trust.

Cllr Paula Ford declared a prejudicial interest as she was on the Coity Wallia Board of Conservators.

### 153. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 21/06/2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

### 154. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

#### Mayor

The Mayor welcomed the Youth Mayor, Ellie O'Connell, who was in attendance to observe the meeting.

The Mayor referred to events he had recently attended including:

- the opening of the Armed Forces Day Parade by the Lord Lieutenant of Mid Glamorgan,
- the Awen Cultural Trust event,
- Cefn Cribwr Open Gardens
- Archbishop McGrath School "First Give" where he was part of the deciding panel to determine the winning team to receive the First Give grant of £1000.
- Porthcawl 10k Run where he started the Future Challenges and the Family Run categories.
- A CCYD Achievement Evening where the excellent achievements of the learners were celebrated.
- Brynteg School production of Grease at the Grand Pavilion Porthcawl,
- The Interfaith Peace March, a unique opportunity to visit a Church, Synagogue and a Mosque all in one day. This was organised by the charity Remembering Srebrenica and sponsored by Race Equality.
- Bridgend's Big show where he joined the Prevention and Wellbeing Service to celebrate the achievements of the fantastic young leaders and ambassadors.

#### Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Social Services and Health

The Deputy Leader also attended the "Big Show", an event developed to celebrate the volunteering efforts and leadership skills of young people from across the County Borough. The Deputy Leader made a special presentation in recognition of work that young carer ambassadors had been undertaking to raise awareness about the challenges that young carers faced.

The Deputy Leader explained the identity card scheme which was recognised by schools, GP surgeries, pharmacists and supermarkets. More than 300 young carer cards were now in use, and their potential was being further expanded to provide discounted access and other benefits with local businesses. Together with the Council and 3rd sector partners they had developed events such as "We are valued" days which

## COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023

were activity opportunities with their schools that they would not otherwise get. Young carer ambassadors also helped develop the Young Carer's Network where young people could make their voices heard while offering insights and opinions on a wide range of issues that affected them.

### Cabinet Member – Finance, Resources and Legal

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal updated Council, following the significant disruption earlier in the week when the ICT systems went down and restricted access to computer systems, the corporate website, the telephone system and a number of interactive services. He explained that the ICT team worked tirelessly to identify and remedy the problem, and as the scope of the issue became apparent, the business continuity plan was instigated. Messages and updates were issued via social media and all telephone contact switched over to a back-up system. Staff worked around the clock to ensure that all systems were restored as quickly as possible. A review would now be carried out and in the meantime, he thanked the ICT team, and acknowledged their efforts and expertise in addressing the matter.

The Cabinet Member was delighted to advise Members that the Council had been presented with silver level status in the Employer Recognition Scheme. This was presented by the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Wales and acknowledged the ongoing efforts to support past and present members of the Armed Forces community. The Council would formally receive certification for its new Silver Employer Recognition Scheme status at the Defence ERS Silver Awards later in the year.

### Cabinet Member – Climate Change and the Environment

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment gave a brief update regarding preparations for the new 20 miles an hour speed limit which would be introduced to the majority of residential roads on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The proposals formed a key part of plans by Welsh Government for reducing pollution, increasing road safety and encouraging people to use alternative modes of transport for short journeys. To support an expected increase in national publicity throughout July and August, a series of answers to frequently asked questions was being developed and would soon be available to share with Members. The change in speed limit would mainly affect restricted roads usually located in residential and built-up areas. Around 90 local roads met the guidance for consideration as being exempt from the new default speed limit and public engagement during the first stage of this process saw a total of 2,684 responses, the vast majority of which were in support of the proposed exemptions. Welsh Government had provided the Council with around £1 million to support the installation of around 600 new posts and signs. Contingencies were available if processes were not fully completed for any of the proposed exemptions. More information was available on the website [DATAMAP DOT GOV DOT WALES](https://www.datamap.gov.wales).

The Cabinet Member was pleased to report that eight green spaces across Bridgend County Borough had been awarded Green Flags this year. Ogmere Vale Fire and Rescue Station, Caerau Market Garden, the Spirit of the Llynfi Woodlands, Tremains Wood in Brackla, Coychurch Crematorium, Bryngarw Country Park, Parc Slip and Maesteg Welfare Park had all been presented with full Green Flag status.

### Cabinet Member – Housing, Planning and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration reported that the Seniors Open would shortly be returning to Royal Porthcawl and arrangements were in place to welcome thousands of golfing fans travelling into the County Borough for the event. With a strong emphasis on active travel, he encouraged spectators to walk, cycle and use

local public transport to and from the event. Public parking spaces would also be available in a field adjacent to the Royal Porthcawl. More than 43,000 people attended the event in 2014, and this generated an estimated economic impact of more than £2m. The advertising value of the comprehensive television coverage which showcased Porthcawl and Bridgend County Borough to the world was calculated at being worth a further £5.2m, which subsequently jumped to £7.8m when the event returned in 2017. He hoped that this year, it would exceed the £10m mark. The tournament would once again be televised on Sky Sports, and many well-known names would be competing, including Ian Woosnam and Ryder Cup legends Darren Clarke and Padraig Harrington. He welcomed Members to join him in congratulating all staff who had worked hard to support this prestigious event and wished the best of luck to the competitors.

#### **Cabinet Member for Education**

The Cabinet Member for Education explained that thanks to the Council's partnership with Awen, Halo Leisure, the Urdd, Menter Bro Ogwr and Town and Community Councils, the 'School's Out' programme was set to provide a huge range of fun activities for children and young people. 'Active 4 Life' holiday schemes for children aged eight to eleven would return to community venues at Bettws, Brackla, Bridgend, Caerau, Garw Valley, Maesteg, Ogmores Valley, Pencoed and Porthcawl, and children were also being encouraged to take part in the summer reading challenge "Ready, Set, Read". The free swim initiative would return to leisure centres and swimming pools where sessions would include crash courses for beginners, stroke improvement lessons and more, and the Youth Support and Safer Streets programme would also be offering sessions for young people throughout the summer holidays. Local libraries would also be offering fun events ranging from Movement and Dance workshops to animation sessions. Bryngarw Country Park would be hosting outdoor theatre performances and young Welsh speakers would be catered for with free Welsh Language holiday play schemes taking place in Maesteg, Porthcawl and Bridgend, and at Welsh speaking sports camps organised by the Urdd.

He asked Members to help spread the word about the availability of the Schools Out programme, details of which could be found at the Council's website.

#### **Cabinet Member – Community Safety and Wellbeing**

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing advised Members that the new Food Sufficiency Grant Scheme was being rolled out. Funded by Welsh Government and BCBC, the scheme was being managed by BAVO, and was designed to tackle food poverty across the County Borough, throughout the summer months by making funding initially available in two phases. The first of these was underway and the second would be in place between 24 July and 4 August. Community organisations could apply to the scheme and use the funding in support of their work.

The Cabinet Member thanked Welsh Government and BAVO, the organisations who were seeking to help local people, and all of the volunteers who were working to make a difference within local communities to ensure that people did not go hungry this summer.

#### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the final recommendations from the Boundary Commission for Wales on how parliamentary boundaries would be configured in future. The changes had been made to bring the size of each area in line with UK Government recommendations, namely that each seat should cover between sixty-nine thousand and seventy-seven thousand voters. The move would also cut the number of Welsh seats from 40 to 32. These recommendations were now final and future MPs

would be elected from these new constituencies instead of the former seats of Bridgend and Ogmere.

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

The Leader provided Members with a brief update on the situation with Zimmer Biomet. The company's decision to close down the Bridgend premises came as a complete surprise, and he had written to senior managers to express extreme disappointment that there was no forewarning or opportunity to discuss the matter beforehand. He urged them to reconsider their decision, and to commit towards the development and consideration of alternative options. If the plant closed, the impact of this decision would be felt not only by the 540-strong workforce, but upon businesses within the supply chain and others who had come to depend upon trade associated with Zimmer Biomet and its staff. Help and support was being offered to all those who had been affected by the news. They were also promoting BCBC as an excellent place to invest in, with advice on funding and start-up support, strong networking opportunities, excellent communication links and a highly skilled local workforce and more. Talks with Zimmer Biomet were continuing, and they were firmly focused upon generating future growth and prosperity and encouraging other businesses to come and see what the area had to offer.

On a brighter note, one of the county borough's longest standing employers, the WEPA Group, celebrated its 75th anniversary. WEPA was among the three largest European hygiene paper manufacturers and led the market in its use of recycled fibre. In June 2020, the Council approved the company's plans for a £100m expansion which doubled production at the plant and created 54 new jobs and safeguarded more than 270 existing positions.

The Leader advised Members that highly pathogenic Avian Influenza, or 'bird flu', had been confirmed at a number of locations and within several wild bird colonies located within Wales. He advised that members of the public should not pick up or handle a dead bird carcass or attempt to pick up a bird that was sick and in distress. If dead wild waterfowl or birds were discovered, they should report them using online guidance available at gov.uk or call the Defra helpline on 034 59 33 55 77. If a sick or injured wild bird was found, they should contact the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999.

The Leader congratulated Penybont FC for fighting back against FC Santa Coloma of Andorra to draw 1-1. The first leg of their UEFA Europa Conference League Qualifier was also the first European fixture to ever take place in Bridgend County Borough, and the Dunraven Brewery field quickly sold out for the event. The second leg was taking place shortly in Andorra. Along with all Members, he wished them the very best of luck.

156. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE QUARTER 1 2023-24**

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented the Capital Programme Update Quarter 1 2023-24 which included an update of the capital budgets and expenditure as at 30 June 2023, the revised capital programme for 2023-24 to 2032-33 and the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24. Appendix A showed the budgets and spend to 30 June 2023 for the individual schemes in 2023-24. Appendix B provided details of the revised capital programme for 2023-24 to 2032-33 and appendix C provided details of the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24.

The Chief Officer explained that since March, the capital programme had changed, and it currently totalled £96.9 million. Most of the increase in that programme was the result of slippage from the last financial year into this year's programme. Table one of the

report detailed how the capital programme was split between the different directorates. The detail of the funding of the programme was shown in table two of the report. The key changes were reported at paragraph 3.15 of the report. She confirmed that Council was operating in line with the approved indicators.

The Cabinet Member for Finances, Resources and Legal apologised for the budget briefing not going ahead as planned and he encouraged all members to try to attend the rescheduled briefing because of the challenges they were currently facing. He welcomed the additional money from Welsh Government but acknowledged revenue pressures and added that officers would be looking into this further.

A Member asked how much of the capital programme was allocated to risk. The Chief Officer replied that the capital programme was allocated on the basis of priorities and many of those priorities would be about risk for the Council. Risk was not identified within the capital programme however many of the individual schemes were about either upgrading, replacing or enhancing the assets that they had to make sure that they were fit for purpose.

The Member replied that he was referring to contingency and asked how much was build cost and how much was being held for contingency?

The Chief Executive explained that within each project, there was a contingency element within the contract, usually an estimate of what might cover an unexpected cost during the course of any particular project. Within the capital programme, they would rarely max out the whole of the available balance on schemes and therefore there was some contingency available within the programme. Not all items in the capital programme would be taking place at the same time, so if things early in the capital programme required additional funding, there would be an impact on things that had been identified later in the programme. They had to manage that risk in that way as opposed to just identifying one sum for risk. They were very aware of risk at the moment as they were also facing unprecedented increases in capital spend. Their focus on the capital programme was greater than it had ever been, and they were proposing to create a Capital Board with greater oversight of what was going on.

A Member referred to the suggested virement of £460,000 from unallocated capital for fleet vehicles related to waste management. He questioned if this was an approach which delivered the best value for money, given the precarious financial position they were in. This would be a two-year interim contract for waste management from March 2024, after which he assumed the vehicles would be redundant. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee had unanimously recommended that Fleet Services consider leasing vehicles and machinery rather than purchasing them outright to determine whether this could provide savings, given that these vehicles were seven years old and only had a life span of nine to 10 years. He asked the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment to guarantee that all options had been considered and that this proposal represented value for money as opposed to leasing more environmentally friendly vehicles until such time as the new waste management contract was awarded.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment explained that the waste contract currently out to tender was a 2-year contract. They were not at a stage to decide where they would go in the future with the types of vehicles required and Welsh Government targets could change how they would proceed from 2026 and beyond. A decision had been made to go for an interim 2-year contract for waste and the method collection remained the same. The cost for all the equipment including the vehicles was £460k compared to the cost for new equipment which would be millions.

The Corporate Director for Communities explained that a decision had been made to have a two-year interim waste contract in BCBC from April 2024 through to March 2026 and then they would be looking at a new service model for the Council. There was the uncertainty of the future Welsh Government recycling targets. They currently used 5 very large refuse collection vehicles that took residual waste and 14 recycling vehicles that were bespoke to Bridgend for their methodology of collection and they would not be able to lease or buy those, so it was very important that they had them as part of this contract. If the recycling target changed, they would have to have a different fleet and a different configuration. From 2030 there would be decarbonisation, and a need for them to consider ultra-low emission vehicles so it would be irresponsible to spend that money now, knowing that these variables could change.

The Corporate Director for Communities provided more detail regarding the existing plant they would be getting for the £460k, a considerable part of which was less than seven years old. There was at least three years more life in the asset and an important part of the 2030 agenda was to get the most use out of it. The cost of getting all the items new, would be in excess of £10 million. This was a prudent option providing value for money at this time.

A Member referred to the overspend and the built in contingencies and asked how often these were being reviewed. He referred to the Waterton Upgrade which still had an allocated budget of £8.144 million even though the Corporate Director for Communities had said that they did not want to stay at that depot site. She also conceded that £3.5 million of that £8.144 million was predicated on an unlikely receipt from Parc Afon Ewenni. He asked how much faith they could have in the capital programme when it contained projects that were not going to come online and had budgets that were contingent to items that were very unlikely to materialise.

The Chief Executive replied that individual project boards looked at risks and cost increases and escalated issues to Corporate Management Board on a very regular basis. He was suggesting that they needed to do more than that in governance terms so they were proposing a Capital Board that could meet possibly every other month then report to Cabinet CMB. They were living in an inflationary society where the focus on the capital programme probably needed to be greater because it was clearly a financial risk to the organisation in terms of the rising costs.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that they did not want to be at the Waterton Depot but the reality of the financial situation was that they would not be able to afford to move from that area in the near future. A new depot could require at least £14 to £15 million and there was a budget allocation of just over £8 million. As stated, £3 million of that was predicated on the capital receipt from disposal of that land which had since been designated as in a flood zone so they were not able to put residential housing on it. That allocation had been in the capital programme for some time and would remain at £8,000,000. They had a Project Board which was working on what was possible at that depot and ways of being more innovative.

A Member noted that there was a £430k allocation in the capital budget for unadopted roads in addition to the half a million allocated the previous year. He asked for clarity on how the money would be used this year and if there would be a cumulative assessment on how effectively the money had been used in adopting roads.

The Corporate Director for Communities explained that the money he was referring to was a one off allocation of £500,000 and they had only spent £70,000 from that allocation. They could not adopt many roads for the £430,000 and this was a one-off pot of money. They were currently looking at unadopted roads and lanes to establish which

ones would benefit most to spend the money wisely. She assured the Member that the money would be spent on the capital works required to put into those roads.

A Member referred to the Grand Pavilion and the change in the original spend from 2022/23 to 2023/24 and asked if the closure of the Pavilion would be delayed as a result of this. She also asked if the actual placement of the tennis courts in Griffin Park, had been decided.

The Chief Executive explained that the closure of the Grand Pavilion would be sometime in the first quarter of the next calendar year. The anticipated timeline was that they would hope to engage a contractor to start on site in the first quarter next year to coincide with the closure. He added that there was a very tight timeline to deliver the project and along with a number of other authorities, they were lobbying for an extension of a year in terms of the delivery until 2026.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment explained that there was still work being done regarding the position of the tennis courts in Griffin Park. Work was ongoing to establish a position for the courts without impacting on the road, and work was due to begin in the autumn.

A Member referred to the pledge made in the Labour manifesto, that by working with the Welsh Government, Labour and Bridgend would deliver free school meals for all primary school children by September 2023 and asked if they would meet that pledge and if not, by when could they expect each and every primary school in Bridgend to be delivering free school meals.

The Cabinet Member for Education replied that there was a pledge originally given back during the election. Unfortunately, when that pledge was written, it was at a very different time prior to the Ukraine invasion and the whole process had become clouded. Costs had spiralled, inflation had gone through the roof and it had meant that they had had to delay their plans. They were now expanding the offer to year three children from September, nursery children by January 24, year four in the summer term and then year five and year six for September 2024. It was taking a little longer than they expected and longer than originally hoped.

A Member noted that £33.8 million would be coming from external grant funding and welcomed this and added that it was a good indication that they were reaching out to see what funding was available. He asked how the Cardiff City Deal Investment fund fitted into that table. In Appendix B there was mention of a Cardiff City Deal and £4.9 million but he asked for more information to see how it would be allocated and the funding application process.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that all of the capital city monies would be shown within that grants total of £33.8 million. That was not all Cardiff Capital Region monies as it would also include monies from Welsh Government and from other funding streams. She would provide a breakdown for Members if required.

The Corporate Director for Communities added that these grants mainly sat in the Communities Directorate. The £33 million was made-up of a significant amount of grants that had been sourced via the Regeneration and the Economic Development Team, including the levelling up funding for the pavilion. They had received £23 million from the Shared Prosperity Fund, and an allocation of £3 million for the Metro scheme in Porthcawl.

## COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023

They had an allocation of £3.5 million for Ewenny Road, Maesteg and nearly £800,000 for ultra-low emission vehicle charge out. The drawdown of the £4.9 specifically mentioned was in relation to those grants.

A Member was advised that he could not submit a question as he had left the Chamber during consideration of this item.

A Member asked for a recorded vote.

Members discussed attending meetings remotely, assurances that they had been in attendance for the whole debate, trust and transparency and the WG requirement to provide hybrid meetings. Members asked the Democratic Services Committee to review procedures going forward and to report back to Council.

A recorded vote was conducted, the result of which was as follows:

For: Councillors H Bennett, A Berrow, JP Blundell, E Caparros, N Clarke, Chris Davies, HJ David, N Farr, P Ford, J Gebbie, R Goode, H Griffiths, S Griffiths, D Hughes, M Hughes, RM James, P Jenkins, M Jones, M Kearns, W Kendall, J Llewellyn-Hopkins, J Pratt, R Smith, JC Spanswick, R Penhale Thomas, J Tildesley, G Walter, H Williams, R Williams, E Winstanley = 30 votes

Against: Councillors F Bletsoe, S Bletsoe, S Easterbrook, D Harrison, M John, I Spiller, T Thomas, A Wathan, Amanda Williams, M Williams, T Wood, E Richards = 12 votes

### RESOLVED:

- Democratic Services Committee to review procedures going forward with regard to remote attendance and voting at meetings, to report back to a future meeting of Council.
- Council noted the Council's Capital Programme 2023-24 Quarter 1 update to 30 June 2023 (Appendix A).
- Council approved the revised Capital Programme (Appendix B).
- Council noted the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24 (Appendix C).

## 157. CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY PLAN 2023-24 AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The Chief Executive introduced a report proposing a one-year Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (CPDP) to support the Council's new Corporate Plan and an updated Corporate Performance Framework to help the Council measure progress on it. He explained that the report was based on a lot of engagement, consultation and feedback from a variety of sources over the last few months, including from Members in terms of member briefing session. It reflected some of the suggestions and recommendations from Members and some of the recommendations from Audit Wales about how the authority managed performance going forward.

The Policy and Performance Manager explained that they had moved to an annual delivery plan approach. Since the recent all Member briefing session they had spent time with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to continue to make improvements as in the plan before them. The new Corporate Plan Delivery Plan represented a much better set of information to inform decision making and should give

a comprehensive view of progress against the Corporate Plan. The Policy and Performance Manager outlined the main improvements and added that the Graduates in her team had started the background work and there would be an update later in the year. She hoped that this was a useful document that clarified some things that had been unclear in the past and helpfully outlined the roles and responsibilities for officers and Members and the relationships and interdependencies between them.

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked the Chief Executive, the Policy and Performance Manager and her team for the engagement with the Committee and for all the work they had put in on the Delivery Plan and Performance Framework. This was a major step in the right direction in addressing some of the weaknesses relating to performance management, which were raised by Audit Wales. He was conscious that this was the start of the process and that the documents would evolve, be flexible and agile as the Delivery Plan and Framework moved to the next stage. He added that rather than monitoring service areas within their own individual silos, they needed to adopt a more holistic approach and closely align scrutiny work to become more performance focused. The Scrutiny Team were working on a proposed model for this, and the options would be presented in due course.

A Member thanked the officers for the honest assessment of where the authority was and where it was heading. He touched on the how they had specifically used the feedback provided by Audit Wales to better clarify what success looks like to be shared as a Council, as residents and stakeholders.

The Policy and Performance Manager explained how the Corporate Plan Development Plan would address some of the criticisms and she provided several examples.

The Chief Executive added that that there were some elements that they were still in dialogue with Audit Wales on, where they did not wholly agree. There were very good examples within the Council of the use of data to inform strategic decisions, particularly in education and family support and within social care and they believed that had not been adequately acknowledged. There were some other elements where they had taken on board the comments and needed to improve.

The Leader thanked the Team that had worked on this and the Scrutiny Committees, the Cabinet Members and the Corporate Management Board for their input. He recognised that they would be continuing to work on quantitative data and indicators and that the plan would continue to evolve with new priorities.

A Member asked what mechanisms were in place to make sure that data was accurate. The Policy and Performance Manager outlined the two main ways that they would be doing that in the coming years.

**RESOLVED:** Council:

- Considered and agreed the first draft Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2023/24 in Appendix 1.
- Considered and agreed the updated Corporate Performance Framework in Appendix 2 and how best to use the document across the Council.

158. **PROPOSALS FOR THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS FOLLOWING THE TRANSITION TO A SINGLE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) FOR CWM TAF MORGANNWG**

The Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy presented a report on the proposed scrutiny arrangements for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public

## COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023

Services Board, following the transition to a single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg. She explained that in order to reduce duplication and enable more effective joint working, the two PSBs currently in place within the footprint had taken forward a merger to create a new PSB for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. This merger would enable the PSB to align with the health board footprint going forward.

The Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy explained that in order to ensure democratic accountability of the PSB, there was a statutory requirement set out in legislation and guidance for a designated Local Government Scrutiny Committee of the relevant authority to scrutinise the work of the PSB.

The Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy outlined the proposed membership and arrangements for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and referred Members to the Draft Terms of Reference, which once agreed, would be reviewed periodically to ensure they were fit for purpose. It was suggested that the appointment of the Chairperson be taken forward on an annual basis, but for greater consistency it was proposed that there was no requirement for an annual rotation of appointment between authorities and that a current chair could be reappointed. It was proposed that this arrangement was taken forward for a two-year period before a review of the arrangement was undertaken.

A Member referred to point 3.12 in the report regarding the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair and suggested that it was important for constituent authorities to have a share of ownership in this new body and that rotation should be brought in, at least every 3 years to help to give the body additional maturity. He accepted the argument that expertise would be gained but there was a counter argument, and he suggested an amendment.

The Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy explained that Council were being asked to endorse the Draft Terms of Reference and to make any further comments as felt appropriate so an amendment was not required at this stage as any comments would be picked up by the PSB and scrutiny. It would be reviewed periodically to make sure it was fit for purpose.

A Member asked what support elected members could expect to receive to ensure they could properly scrutinise the work of the PSB. The Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy replied that they would be arranging training as set out in the Terms of Reference and they would link in with the Wellbeing Commissioner to see what was available.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration replied that he and the Leader had a very productive meeting with the new Future Generations Commissioner a few weeks previously where they discussed the support offered both to local authorities and to elected Members from the Commissioner's Office. They agreed to have training put in place in terms of how the wellbeing of Future Generations Act should be embedded in local authorities. It was important to ensure that Members taking part in this scrutiny had that understanding of the aims of the PSB.

RESOLVED: Council:

- Agreed to the creation of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising elected Members from Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend County Borough Councils to scrutinise the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board;

- Endorsed the Draft Terms of Reference of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Appendix 1 and made further comments.
- Determined the PSB Statutory members (non-executive) and `invited participants` to serve as co-opted members on the Cwm Taf PSB JOSC as highlighted within section 3 of the report.
- Agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair arrangements, highlighted within section 3 of the report, be taken forward, commencing from the beginning of the 2023/24 Municipal Year.
- Agreed that the support and administrative arrangements, highlighted within section 3 of the report be provided by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, for a 2-year period, commencing from the beginning of the 2023/24 Municipal Year before a review of the arrangements was undertaken.
- Agreed that all Members of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB JOSC be provided with training to assist them in undertaking their new role.

159. **APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Monitoring Officer presented a report advising Members that there were vacancies for Independent Members on the Council's Standards Committee and that appointments were required to fill these vacancies. Also following feedback from a Standards Committee meeting, it was recommended that a report be brought to Members to confirm the remit of the Committee and the legislative background.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the role and functions of the Committee as set out in the report. Council previously approved the membership of the Committee be increased to 8 members, which added an additional independent Member to the composition. They had recently been notified of the sad passing of Mr Jeff Baker, who was an independent member and more recently, they had received resignations of Mrs Judith Keeley and Mr Cliff Jones, both independent members. The Committee, therefore, had 4 vacancies for independent members.

The Monitoring Officer explained that following a rigorous interview process, the panel recommended the following appointments be approved by Council: Mr Peter Baker, Miss Sue Maughan, Mr Roy Lynch and Mr Shawn Cullen. Cllr Graham Walters sat on the interview panel and he confirmed that these were suitable candidates.

A Member asked if it was correct that only one woman was being appointed and she asked what steps were being taken to attract more women when vacancies arose in future.

The Monitoring Officer replied that initially there had been 3 or 4 applicants but only 1 remained to interview stage as the others had withdrawn from the process.

The Deputy Leader explained that she was quite concerned that this Committee would be looking at standards across the County Borough for all genders and there was only one female. These appointments were for four years and they needed to encourage a better representation of the residents.

The Monitoring Officer replied that there were regulations they needed to follow when they advertised, and these stated who was eligible and they then placed the appropriate adverts and circulated to other local authorities. They did not get a great response for the four vacancies however she felt that the candidates were more diverse in terms of

## COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023

their age profile, the demographics, their careers and where they lived so there was a better balance now.

A Member concurred with the Deputy Leader and pointed out that in terms of political appointments, that was within the gift of Group Leaders. He added that his group did not have representation on that Committee.

A Member noted that there may be a lack of diversity across the panel makeup and suggested that in future when looking at promoting these opportunities, they also approach organisations such as the Women's Equality Network Wales, Stonewall and the Race Council Cymru to get more diversity.

A member asked Members of the Standards Committee if the people appointed were the best people in their opinion to conduct the role that they were asked to, gender aside. Councillor Walter confirmed that that was the case. There were four candidates that met the criteria out of the people that they interviewed.

Cllr M Williams confirmed that he had to withdraw from the selection process because he had a prejudicial interest but he assured all Members that it was quite a strong first round and whoever emerged from that was going to be good. It was disappointing that the female candidates withdrew for whatever reason and he supported diversity so long as the people were qualified to do the job.

RESOLVED: Council:

- Noted the remit of the Standards Committee and the legislative background in which the Committee operated;
- Appointed the Independent Members outlined at paragraph 3.2 of the report with immediate effect for an initial period of four years;
- Noted that the Chairperson would be appointed at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

### 160. INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING

The Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy informed Council of an information report for noting, that had been published since the last scheduled meeting. The information report was the Annual Report of the Standards Committee.

The Leader placed on record the Council's thanks to the outgoing Chair, Mr Jones OBE and to Mrs J Keily for their contribution to the work of the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED: Council acknowledged the publication of the report referred to in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

### 161. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FROM:

#### **Cllr Freya Bletsoe to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal**

Reports over the weekend in The Times newspaper have highlighted that still, years later public building such as schools, offices, libraries etc have significant levels of asbestos in the fabric of those buildings. The report highlights that despite knowing of these issues authorities are doing little or nothing to remove the asbestos and to therefore mitigate the risk to human health.

As legally a register of asbestos should be kept on a room by room basis of each premises affected, and I have no doubt that a significant number of premises that BCBC manage or maintain will have asbestos in them, can I ask what this authority is doing to mitigate the workplace harm of teachers, librarians and office staff from the long term effects of asbestos and what is this authority doing to safeguard children who are being educated in rooms that have asbestos in them – as per our statutory obligations under the WFG Act?

Could I also ask as an elected member and Chair of Scrutiny to see the up-to-date risk register and associated reports for asbestos that is contained in the premises we oversee.

### **Response**

In response to the question, we would advise that the authority's approach and policy on asbestos management is to actively manage the asbestos in-situ, to ensure that asbestos products remain in a good and safe condition thus meeting our statutory obligations under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 the legal frameworks which underpins the management of asbestos in non-domestic premises.

This approach reflects the Health & Safety Executive's guidance on asbestos management which advises that the presence of asbestos is not a health hazard when safely managed and contained and is only hazardous when disturbed. We do not undertake the systematic removal of asbestos within buildings, as unnecessarily asbestos removal can be more dangerous than leaving it in place and managing. We do however take steps to remove asbestos containing materials where this is recommended as part of the management approach, and this is always undertaken through specialist contractors in accordance with approved methodologies. This approach has seen a spend of approximately £190,000 on asbestos surveys and monitoring and a further investment of over £1,000,000 on asbestos remediation and removal, from the opening financial year 2020/2021 to the close of financial year 2022/2023. This expenditure does not include asbestos related works that form part of planned maintenance or building projects and therefore the total expenditure on asbestos related works will be higher.

The presence of asbestos within our managed property portfolio has been identified through asbestos management surveys which have been undertaken for all BCBC managed buildings. These reports have been used to create a risk register for all Asbestos Containing Materials within our buildings which contains over 5000 entries within approximately 170 sites. All items are re-inspected on an annual basis through a rolling program of annual asbestos re-inspection surveys, which monitors and records the condition of all known asbestos containing materials. This annual check is supplemented by a quarterly inspection of the buildings which is undertaken by the site's responsible person or their appropriate team member. The centrally held electronic asbestos risk register is updated based on the findings of these surveys and subsequent remedial actions will be carried out as required. This process is managed by the authorities dedicated Asbestos Officer who works with specialist asbestos consultants and HSE licenced asbestos removal contractors to ensure this process is completed in line with the relevant regulations. The asbestos Officer would be able to take the Chair of Scrutiny through the register if required.

The authority published a new Corporate Asbestos Management Plan and Asbestos Management Policy in 2021 and this is reviewed annually in accordance with any statutory, regulatory or guidance changes. For all premises that BCBC manage this is supplemented by a Local Asbestos Management Plan which holds copies of the sites most up-to-date risk registers and asbestos management guidance. These files must be

reviewed by all personnel working on a property to ensure the Asbestos Containing Materials are not disturbed and their condition is maintained. These files also contain the sites asbestos management survey and are accessible for anyone wishing to review the documentation.

**Supplementary question from Cllr Freya Bletsoe**

I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member and officers for their comprehensive response, and it's heartening to hear that BCBC take their statutory obligations seriously and execute them with such diligence. Who is undertaking these inspections? Is it a nominated officer within BCBC or is it outsourced to a third party company and if it is an officer, do they have the required qualifications to undertake these inspections? And finally, I'd welcome the opportunity to meet with the asbestos officer as offered in the response to further understand the authority's position on this very impactful and important subject.

**Response**

We have a nominated asbestos officer in post and they will contact you to find a suitable time for you to come over and have those discussions. That person was responsible for undertaking those inspections.

**Cllr Ian Williams to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal**

With footfall in Bridgend Town Centre struggling to hit pre pandemic levels can I ask the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal what measures are being taken to work with bus companies to safeguard existing bus routes (See attached) and mitigate any further cuts to ever decreasing services?

Is the Cabinet Member prepared to make a commitment to this council that it will ensure that subsidies will not be cut and the lifeline for many residents that is local bus services will see no further cuts for the term of this current council.

**Response**

In response to the question, we would advise that the provision of bus services in the County is a commercial activity, delivered by the private sector and not a statutory responsibility of the Local Authority.

However, we would advise that the authority does engage with the commercial bus operators in regard of local and regional services. Most recently with the ending on the 24th July of the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) which was put in place by Welsh Government to assist bus companies to manage through the post pandemic recovery as passenger numbers had not returned to their pre Covid Levels that would have otherwise placed services at risk. This funding is being replaced with a Bus Transition Fund (BTF) to ensure that the majority of the current services will be protected, although some services may change to reflect different travel patterns following the pandemic. Work will be ongoing to develop a longer-term sustainable funding model that bridges the gap to franchising as mooted by Welsh Government.

Ultimately it is passenger numbers on public transport that will ensure their viability, and as such constituents should consider that it is either use the services or potentially lose them.

As bus services in Bridgend are on the whole run as commercial services, as stated above and do not receive any direct subsidies from the Council it is impossible to

guarantee that future reductions in services are not made by bus companies for the reasons already mentioned.

**Supplementary question from Ian Williams**

My supplementary question is related to bus services but is directed towards the Cabinet Member for Regeneration. In light of the answer provided by the Cabinet Member and with no assurances the bus routes will be protected which could lead to a potential drop in footfall in Bridgend town centre, huge amounts of money being spent in Maesteg and Porthcawl in the last few years when Bridgend is not even thought worthy of enough funding to de-pedestrianise its town centre, keep public toilets open or fund the shop mobility scheme, all of which excludes many residents from our town centre. What plans does this Council have to revitalise the daytime economy in our town centre in the next 3 1/2 years? Please don't include the possibility of a new college as it's not even gone through planning and will only be open for 40 weeks of the year if it ever gets built.

**Response**

I'm really pleased about the developments happening in Porthcawl and Maesteg certainly, but I absolutely agree that we can find more things to do in Bridgend. I recently had a very exhaustive tour of the Town Centre, along with the Principal Officer for Regeneration discussing exactly that. Part of the issues that we find within the town centre is that many of the properties are owned by private owners, which then creates a lot more difficulty in terms of how we can plan and regenerate those units. It is something that I really want to push forward. It is something we're looking at in terms of placemaking and other strategies. As Members of the Town Centre will be aware, I also am very keen to sit down with the Town Council to look at how we best can do that and how we can work together to push that forward. In terms of footfall and de-pedestrianisation, I know there's been a lot of discussion around the pedestrianisation of the Town Centre. I must say I don't think it's the silver bullet that everyone thinks it will be. However, I'm more than happy to look at what we can do to find the best of both worlds. I know there have been previous discussion about why certain vans are allowed into the town centre through the bollards and that is simply due to police regulations, not the local authority, and not down to what we choose to let through. Again, I am more than happy to work and discuss with members on how we can look at new plans to try and encourage footfall at the end of the day, though, I think fundamentally we need to find new properties to be filled. We need to find new businesses that want to come and be excited about our Town Centre, and that's not an easy fix, but it's something I'm certainly determined to push forward and something I want to see happen in our Town Centre because our Town Centre deserves to be amazing, and I think we can do more.

**Supplementary question from Cllr Ross Thomas .**

I absolutely concur with the essence of Cllr William's original question; bus services are absolutely a lifeline. Unfortunately, we've had notification in the Maesteg area that the early morning service is being withdrawn from a national provider. That would be a devastating impact on a number of people trying to get to employment opportunities, healthcare provision, all manner of issues really. I appreciate the commercial companies are facing difficult decisions much like this Council is on an annual basis. There really appears to be a lack of joint thinking, joined up thinking across the whole of Wales with regards to public transport across the network. So what conversations is this Council having, what pressure is this Council putting on Welsh Government to have that joined up approach and a long-term plan for sustainable bus services that can really help people in this borough?

**Response**

The position we were in back six months ago, we could have ended up with no buses running. All the bus services in the County Borough are private companies, they're not statutory and we do not have to fund them. There has been a lot of work done across Wales for Labour Welsh Government to put money there to keep that service going though this year into the next March. We have still got a lot more work to do now to see where we go and what we do to support the bus services from April 2024 because they are vital to our communities. They are not a public service, but Welsh Government have plans within the next two years to bring in a franchising system, where we will be looking to bring the bus service back into public control because the big mistake was many years ago when they were deregulated, and we ended up with the situation we have now. We don't have a lot of control but there is a lot of support going in from Welsh Government. The officers in this County borough have worked hard day and night for the last couple of weeks and months to get the situation of the subsidies to continue. We do provide support from the revenue budget for the bus stops which are not free of charge and again, not statutory. Maybe in the future we need to look at this. There is money going in there, but I can assure you, there's a lot of discussion behind the scenes with Ministers and officers to make sure there's a joined-up approach across Wales. When it comes to Maesteg, when they looked at this service, there was .9 persons or less than one person, per bus journey using the bus service. It was heading towards £70,000 to £80,000 subsidy we would have to put in. It would be cheaper to pay for a taxi. With the situation with the finances, we really cannot justify spending that sort of money for one person per bus journey.

**Cllr Martin Williams to the Leader**

Coity Wallia Common is a unique landscape that covers over 1,000 hectare of our county borough stretching from Pencoed to Sarn, Coity to Bryncethin and beyond. The common is a diverse habit and a feature that we should be rightly proud of. However, it a largely forgotten corner of our county left to be maintained by volunteers on a meagre budget. Could the Leader please tell me how BCBC currently supports Coity Wallia and what plans this authority has to protect this vital habitat for future generations.

**Response**

It is understood that a Board of Conservators manage two areas of common land (Mynydd-y-Gaer including Allt-yr-Rhiw woods and Cefn Hirgoed/Hirwaun) which extend to about 2,400 acres in total.

These areas are noted for their high scenic quality and are crossed by metalled highways and public rights of way. As land managers the Coity Wallia Board of Conservators undertake maintenance but also need to deal with nuisance such as litter being deposited by persons traversing the common and straying animals

Up to 2018 the Council had provided £21,170 per annum as financial assistance to the Board of Conservators but due to the need to make financial savings a decision was made for this funding to cease.

Since that time it is understood that the Board of Conservators had sought financial support from alternative sources such as the Town and Community Councils within whose areas the commons are situated together with the landowner, Dunraven Estates.

In 2021 the Coity Wallia Board of Conservators requested financial assistance from the Council to assist with the increased maintenance burden. Officers considered the matter as there was only limited potential to assist.

At that time the Council decided that an annual grant of up to £5,000 could be provided as a contribution to the Coity Wallia Board of Conservators maintenance burden subject to the submission of a programme of works from the Coity Wallia Board of Conservators and paid retrospectively upon submission of invoices/evidence of works being carried out.

**Supplementary question from Cllr Martin Williams,**

Thank you for the answer to the question. It has been recognised that Walia is a very valuable natural resource for the County Borough and also within the written answer it is acknowledged that this authority's contribution to the to the Board of Conservators has reduced from £21,000 to 0 and then there was a deal brokered where it went back up to £5000 a year. Four of the local Community Councils, Pencoed, Coity, Coychurch Higher and St Bride's minor are all now contributing as well. What we have there is a Board of Conservators who are maintaining this 2400 acre natural resource on a shoestring and at a time when this authority quite rightly, is championing the green agenda. We have our aspirations of Net Zero by 2030 and we contribute £35,000 to Kier to run their fleet on biodiesel and we dedicate officer time to balsam bashing and planting trees and the rest of it. It does seem that we're missing an opportunity to support this natural resource which can do so much as a carbon sink and more locally enhance our environment. What I would ask the Leader is perhaps not to double the contribution that this Council makes and maybe not make any more direct contribution at all, but to work more closely and perhaps dedicate some officer time to work more closely with the Board of Conservators to perhaps work in in a more collaborative way that is beneficial for all and aligns with our Net Zero objectives, but also to work with the Board Of Conservators to help them extract grants and external funding which we know is out there for this sort of enterprise so that we all have a mutual benefit from that. I would like to seek that assurance please.

**Response**

Thank you for the supplementary question. Can I thank Coychurch Higher, St Bride's Community Council, Coity Higher Community Council and Pencoed Town Council for their contributions. We are, of course, more than happy to work and provide officer time and support to any organisation that wants to conserve and indeed enhance the biodiversity features of the County Borough. We would also call upon the landowner as well to work with the Board of Conservators because of course there is a responsibility on landowners and we are happy to try and help you give that assurance. We can give no guarantee, though, that that help can secure funding, but we've been very successful in the past where we worked with organisations. I was very pleased when Awen Cultural Trust secured over £130,000 worth of funding through the National Heritage Lottery Funds Woodland Investment grant as an example of a grant and funding and support that is available to organisations within the County Borough and indeed I know that this is several years ago now, but certainly in my time as a Member, the Board, was successful in securing a grant from Biffa and that was for biodiversity enhancement works on Coity Walia Common. I'm sure there's a possibility of success in the future if other pots of funding are applied to and of course we'll look to work with any organisation in the County Borough that we can to do that. We have a very strong track record where we've worked with the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales and with our win on the investment in our Valleys Regional Park, that has boosted the biodiversity in the County Borough.

**Supplementary question from Tim Thomas**

It's quite clear that the Commoners Association have a vital role. With the reduction in funding, I am just seeking reassurance that the common land in the County Borough will continue to be protected from any development.

**Response**

Thank you for that supplementary question. Of course, common land is protected by legislation and regulation. I'm not sure the specific regulation that is in place for that common because there are different acts of Parliament and different forms of regulation for different commons across the County Borough across Wales and across the UK. We can of course establish the relevant regulation that applies to Coity Walia then in addition to the most important protection, which is the regulation and the law, there is of course, the protection within the planning process and indeed the common land is recognised for its importance within the replacement local development plan, just as it is in the Local Development Plan.

**Cllr Tim Thomas to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the quality of water from our rivers and seas within the County Borough?

**Response**

Whilst we agreed that this is a matter of concern, the management of water quality in our rivers and the sea is the responsibility of Natural Resources Wales (NRW). We do of course value our rivers and waterways and wherever possible will work with partners organisations and agencies to demonstrate this. An example is the Ogmore River clean-up that is taking place in August this year, with officers from BCBC, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, NRW, the Police and Fire & Rescue Service and a number of volunteers. There will be many pieces of rubbish, including hundreds of car tyres removed, that would otherwise have found themselves flowing out to sea from the mouth of the River Ogmore.

**Supplementary question from Cllr Tim Thomas**

Firstly, I appreciate that responsibility for river cleanliness lies chiefly with organisations such as Natural Resources Wales and a couple of other stakeholders, but nevertheless, I do believe that we still have a role in this Council as a Community Leader to ensure our rivers are of a certain quality. The danger otherwise is the other areas of responsibility that the Council has, such as biodiversity, could be severely compromised. With that in mind, I'm concerned by the BBC who reported back in 2018 about high pollution levels in the River Ogmore. Perhaps more recently, it was reported that the River Garw, which runs into the Ogmore, has some of the highest levels of untreated sewerage deposits in Wales and England. My question is to either the Leader or the relevant Cabinet Member, has he made any representations to Welsh Water or any relevant organisations regarding improving the situation? If not, will he do so in the near future?

**Response**

I have not sent anything recently to Welsh Water but last August the Leader sent letters raising concerns but that was almost a year ago and it's perhaps time that we now get back in touch with Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales. He's mentioned the River Ogmore and lots of parts are of good quality but the Garw clearly needed more work. It's not our responsibility but in terms of wider biodiversity, the green and blue

agenda it is our responsibility. Along with the Leader I will take that back to Natural Resources Wales and press for further action on the Garw River.

I recently had a series of conversations with representatives from Natural Resources Wales in Cardiff, with senior managers and the Chief Executive, because Natural Resources Wales are the regulatory body in Wales in terms of water quality in our rivers and in the sea and along the coast. I did raise that issue and I've also written to Welsh Water and will continue to make representations because we do want our rivers and the sea to be cleaner.

### **Supplementary Question**

I would like to ask that we as a Council recognise the tremendous work that goes on in cleaning our rivers throughout the county and in particular the work of the Llynfi Valley River Group, a group of volunteers who give up their Saturday mornings once a fortnight, in sunshine or rain, and they're doing tremendous work to rid the river of so much waste, it is just incredible what comes out. I'm also aware of the other voluntary organisations as well so I think if we could acknowledge the tremendous work that goes in by organisations like that. What I would also like to stress is the work that Huw Irranca-Davies and Chris Elmore, MP and MS are doing in working with Welsh water to try to get to do something about this shocking statistic of the Garw River. I really look forward to a combined effort by all authorities to try to bring this matter under some control before too long.

### **Response**

I would like to say a big thank you to the Llynfi Valley River Group, the Ogmere Valley Priide Group and Keep Nantymoel Tidy. I would like to shout out again about the Ogmere River Clean up where the River Ogmere approaches the sea. This massive project is going on at the end of August and it's basically an Army veteran with environmental concerns and he's organised more than 30 groups, some volunteer groups, ourselves and the Vale of Glamorgan working together. I've seen drone footage of how bad that river is and a lot of has come from the Garw River. Thousands of tyres and shopping trolleys lying in the mud in that river as it flows into the sea should be removed by the end of August.

162. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

The meeting closed at 18:45.