

CABINET - TUESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2024

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2024 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

JC Spanswick
HM Williams

N Farr
JPD Blundell

W R Goode

J Gebbie

Officers:

Oscar Roberts
Stephen Griffiths
Carys Lord
Claire Marchant
Janine Nightingale
Kelly Watson
Mark Shephard
Deborah Exton
Lindsay Harvey
Michael Pitman

Business Administrative Apprentice - Democratic Services
Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Corporate Director - Communities
Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Chief Executive
Deputy Head of Finance
Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Jane Gebbie – Personal Interest in Item 4

280. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	Cabinet approved the Minutes of 19/12/2023 as a true and accurate record
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

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281. Budget Monitoring 2023-24 - Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report which updated on the Council’s revenue financial position as at 31st December 2023.</p> <p>She outlined the summary financial position at 31st December 2023 as set out in section 3 of the report. The main financial pressures were in the service areas of Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB), Home to School Transport (HtST) and Homelessness.</p> <p>The following Appendices accompanied the report: Appendix 1 – The prior year Budget Reductions carried Forward Into 2023-24 Appendix 2 – The monitoring of 2023-24 budget reductions and risk tracker Appendix 3 – The revenue budget monitoring to 31st December 2023</p> <p>The Cabinet Member Finance, Resources & Legal stated that the Council was in a difficult position and this was evident from the report. It was important that we monitored the Councils position and highlighted the biggest risks that were faced at each quarter in order to mitigate as much as possible. He suggested that this was taken away and looked at to ensure we were reporting on the revenue outturn and overspends accordingly.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member Climate Change and the Environment added that it was important we look at the overspends and are able to work on ways forward to reduce these. An example was fleet services, whereby the overspend has increased since the last financial year. Cabinet Members requested that any major changes to overspends were reported back as soon as possible.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Finance, performance and change agreed to look at processes of budget monitoring going forward to ensure these are tightened up.</p> <p>Cabinet noted the projected revenue position for 2023-24</p>
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

282. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented to Cabinet the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28, which set out the spending priorities of the Council, key investment objectives and budget areas targeted for necessary savings. The strategy includes a financial forecast for 2024-2028 and a detailed draft revenue budget for 2024-25.</p> <p>The draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the spending priorities for the Council for the next 4 years alongside a detailed budget for 2024-25. Attached as appendices to the report were the Budget Pressures and Budget Reduction Proposals.</p> <p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change advised that the proposals set out in Appendix B highlighted potential savings areas and the associated risks that went with these should they be enacted. If approved by Cabinet the draft MTFS will be submitted for consultation with the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees before a final version is presented to Council for approval on 28 February 2024.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Legal thanked Officers who put this report together as it was challenging, given the savings that had already been made year on year. He stressed that these were draft proposals, and nothing had been agreed yet. The proposals were subject to change following the scrutiny process over the coming weeks, before finally being submitted to Council at the end of February. Many of the proposals are considered high risk, and therefore will need to be carefully considered at every stage of the process.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Legal stressed that the Council’s reserves were constantly under review, and that currently, every amount of reserve has a clear justification as to why it cannot be used.</p> <p>He added that the Budget Consultation is now live and the public can provide their views on the reductions and offer any alternatives they may have.</p> <p>Cabinet submitted for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees the 2024-25 annual budget and development of the MTFS 2024-25 to 2027-28, as set out in this report, prior to presenting a final version for approval by Council on 28 February 2024.</p>
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

283. Appointment of Local Authority Governors

Decision Made	<p>Corporate Director – Education and Family Support presented a report which sought approval from Cabinet for the appointment of local authority governors to the school governing bodies listed at paragraph 3.1</p> <p>For the 11 current local authority governor vacancies at the 10 schools in the table at 3.1, the applicants met the approved criteria for appointment as a local authority governor and there was no competition for the vacancies. Therefore, the recommended appointments are set out for approval.</p> <p>Cabinet approved the appointments detailed at paragraph 3.1.</p>
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

284. Demolition of Brackla 1 Multi-Storey Carpark Network Rail Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA)

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which highlighted the progress on the proposed demolition of Brackla 1 and sought approval to progress further.</p> <p>She explained that there were a number of issues surrounding the physical site and its proximity to the rail line as well as supermarkets Aldi and Asda. These were highlighted in section 3 of the report.</p> <p>She highlighted the One of the conditions stipulated by Network Rail in the BAPA is that prepayment of their estimated cost of carrying out the services associated with the project is required. The total estimated costs have yet to be provided by Network Rail and will not be available until the appointed demolition contractor puts forward their demolition methodology and enters into negotiation with Network Rail.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment welcomed the report and looked forward to the process getting underway. We have a new college facility being built by the old police station building and so the sooner this work moves forward, the sooner we can benefit from this.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education echoed these comments and asked with regards to the demolition, have the college been made aware of the process and time frames associated with this.</p>
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	<p>The Corporate Director Communities confirmed that they had been in consultation with the college from the start of the process 3 years ago and continue to provide updates on the process.</p> <p>Cabinet: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Noted the progress on the proposed demolition of Brackla 1 and the discussions with Network Rail leading to the compilation of the Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA).ii. Approved entering into a BAPA with Network Rail in accordance with the permitted waiver under rule 3.2.11 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.iii. Delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy, to negotiate and agree the final terms of the BAPA and enter into the agreement and/or any further deeds and documents which are supplemental to the BAPA.iv. Noted that approval for the advanced payment will be sought at a later date in accordance with paragraph 9.4 of the Financial Procedure Rules once the fee level is known.v. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy, to negotiate and agree the final terms of the relevant agreements with Aldi and ASDA and to enter into those agreements.
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

285. Urban and Rural Grass Cutting

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which sought approval to reintroduce the in-house delivery of urban and rural grass cutting.</p> <p>She explained that a proposal has been made to return urban and rural grass cutting to an in-house provision after the current contract expires. A preference for an in-house service has been expressed by</p>
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	<p>the Cabinet Member for Communities in consideration of better control of the overall delivered service when considered in the context of other grass cutting operations that already occur in-house. It was anticipated that the cost to maintain the current service level from an external provider would increase due to inflationary pressures being seen within the economy and would exceed the currently available budget, therefore having more control over the delivery of this service would prove to be better for budget management.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member Climate Change and Environment welcomed the report and hoped that going forward, the service could be one service cutting all grass in the borough. Currently the service is split in two, whereby parks and playing fields is done under separate terms and conditions. Going forward we need to be more efficient, and this report will allow for this.</p> <p>Cabinet following making an amendment to the recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved the return of the urban and grass cutting service to an in-house provision.• To Delegated authority to the Corporate Director Communities, with consultation from the Cabinet Member - Climate Change and Environment to agree changes to the level of service provision to meet the available budget.
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

286. Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2022-23

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which sought Cabinets approval on the 2022-23 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.</p> <p>She explained that the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report includes details on number of areas as set out in section 3 of the report. It highlighted the increase in demand on both Adult and Children’s Social Care however these demands were managed successfully within compliance targets.</p> <p>Following sight at the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 on 6th of December 2023, recommendations were made and put forward for Cabinet to receive this report to ensure that Members had full awareness of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding. The Scrutiny Committee also asked that comparative data from the last 5 years be included to allow a fuller picture on how the Council is</p>
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	<p>responding toward its statutory safeguarding responsibilities.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader paid tribute and commended the staff who discharge their duties so effectively, it was important to highlight this given the position we were in as a Council only a couple of years ago. It shows commitment by staff and the continued improvement was evident.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader highlighted that if people have capacity, they can decline consent. It was important to make that distinction to the public who are reading the statistics.</p> <p>The Leader highlighted the importance of reporting safeguarding concerns, and that if anyone wishes to do so, it can be done anonymously.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing asked in relation to page 151 – violence against women, there are no stats here regarding race, gender or disability. She asked if these were included somewhere else. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that these were recorded, however she would look at including these in the annual report going forward.</p> <p>Cabinet approved the 2022-23 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.</p>
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

**287. Social Services And Wellbeing Directorate Policies - Foster Wales
Bridgend Foster Carer Recording Policy and Foster Wales Bridgend
Finances Policy**

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which sought Cabinet approval of the Foster Wales Bridgend Finances policy (Appendix 1) and the Foster Wales Bridgend Foster Carer Recording Policy (Appendix 2) in order to support service provision in Bridgend County Borough Council's Fostering Service (Foster Wales Bridgend).</p> <p>She explained that For both policies, relevant members of the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate were engaged and provided support in the drafting of the policy content for each aspect of the fostering service. The new Foster Wales Bridgend Foster Carer Recording policy has been developed to provide Foster Carers with an understanding relating to the importance of recording, along with outlining what recording is required of them, and how and where to store their records. The Finances policy has been</p>
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	<p>revised to remove the specific figures relating to allowance amounts. This is because the Welsh Government review and set an increased allowance for Foster Carers each year, and so this change ensures that the policy does not become outdated due to these annual rises.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader stressed the importance of foster carers having the understanding of what was expected of them and for them to feel supported in their role. She highlighted the amazing job that foster carers in the borough do for our children and the benefits to a child are significant.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader stated that Foster Wales have a campaign ongoing to recruit foster cares, and urged people who have considered foster caring to look at their website.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member Finance, Resources & Legal asked if more information could be provided on the 'Refer a Friend' scheme</p> <p>Cabinet considered and approved the reviewed Foster Wales Bridgend Financial policy at Appendix 1, and the new Foster Wales Bridgend Foster Carer Recording policy at Appendix 2.</p>
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

288. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	16 th January 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 6:00pm