

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 2024

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 2024 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

A R Berrow
C Davies
N Farr
GH Haines
J E Pratt

F D Bletsoe
P Davies
J Gebbie
W J Kendall
JC Spanswick

S J Bletsoe
S Easterbrook
W R Goode
M Lewis
T Thomas

E L P Caparros
M J Evans
RM Granville
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
E D Winstanley

Present Virtually

H T Bennett
C L C Davies
RM James
R J Smith
AJ Williams
T Wood

JPD Blundell
P Ford
P W Jenkins
I M Spiller
I Williams

N Clarke
S J Griffiths
M R John
G Walter
MJ Williams

RJ Collins
D M Hughes
RL Penhale-Thomas
A Wathan
R Williams

Officers:

Mark Galvin
Rachel Keepins
Carys Lord
Claire Marchant
Janine Nightingale
Alex Rawlin
Oscar Roberts
Mark Shephard
Kelly Watson
Lindsay Harvey

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Democratic Services Manager
Chief Officer - Finance, Housing & Change
Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Corporate Director - Communities
Corporate Policy & Performance Manager
Business Administrative Apprentice - Democratic Services
Chief Executive
Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy
Corporate Director - Education, Early Years and Young People

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

30. Apologies for absence

Decision Made	Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:- Councillor H Griffiths Councillor M Jones Councillor S Aspey Councillor M Kearn Councillor R Collins Councillor M Hughes Councillor D Harrison Councillor Alex Williams Councillor JH Tildesley
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

31. Declarations of Interest

Decision Made	The following declarations of interest were made:- Councillors F Bletsoe and S Bletsoe – prejudicial interests in Agenda item 4, as a family member was an employee of Welsh Water. Both Members left the meeting whilst this item was being considered. Councillor E Winstanley – personal interest in Agenda item 8, as Maesteg Town Hall and the Grand Pavilion were mentioned in the report, facilities managed by Awen Cultural Trust of which she was an employer. She also declared a personal interest in this item as a School Governor of two schools in her Ward. Councillor Winstanley also declared a further personal interest in Agenda item 4, as a member of the Newton Blue Tits Society Councillor R Goode – prejudicial interest in Agenda item 8, as Chairperson of a community centre which caters for Flying Start provision in Nantymoel, which is referenced to in the report. Councillor Goode left the meeting whilst this item was being considered. Councillor T Thomas – personal interest in Agenda item 8, as he had submitted an application to become a
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	<p>School Governor at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg School, Llangynwyd, and he also has a child being educated at the school</p> <p>Councillor Amanda Williams – personal interest in Agenda item 8, as a School Governor at Coety Primary and Brynteg Comprehensive Schools</p> <p>Councillor J Pratt - personal interest in Agenda item 4, as a member of the HM Coastguards.</p> <p>Councillor I Williams – personal interest in Agenda item 8, as a School Governor at Brynteg Comprehensive School.</p>
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

32. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<p>That the minutes of the following meetings of Council be approved as a true and accurate record:-</p> <p>13 March 2024 17 April 2024</p>
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

33. Presentation to Council by Representatives of Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Executive presented a report that introduced representatives from Welsh Water to give a presentation on the latest work they had been progressing in respect primarily to water quality and streetworks performance.</p> <p>The presentation covered the following main themes:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 2023 Bathing Water results were positive in the County Borough, other than at Ogmores-by-Sea2. Storm overflows – Porthcawl and other coastal assets/areas (noting that water quality diminishes with incidents of heavy rainfall)
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3. Restbay water quality – Deemed one of the best in Europe
4. River water quality – Mostly moderate (though some locations were classed as good)
5. Water quality challenges
6. River Ogmore pollution incident
7. How to work together to achieve better results – with BCBC, RNLI and Natural Resources Wales
8. Streetworks Performance in the BCBC area

Questions were then asked of the Welsh Water representatives, for example:

- Do you monitor the water quality of bathing water in ‘real time’ and what is the water quality at our biggest bay in Newton;
- Based on WW’s own data from November 2023, it appears that an estimated 21 billion litres of raw untreated sewage was emitted from Penybont treatment works. How is this amount going to be reduced and how are you going to invest to improve this situation and its impact on our ecosystems, which includes wildlife no longer being seen at our local rivers
- The source of pollution at Ogmore river last May, it is noted that WW do not know where this originated from?
- There has been significant underinvestment in terms of infrastructure across the UK in recent times, so I welcome the £96b promised over the next 5 years to improve this. This will no doubt impact upon increased bills for customers. How much will Senior Officers in WW receive in bonuses and pensions within the next 12 months, as households see these bills increasing
- In terms of Streetworks myself and a number of members from my group have had cause to contact the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of WW directly in the last 6 – 8 months on a number of occasions regarding streetworks complaints, so I am surprised from the presentation which confirms that no such complaints had been made over this period or possibly longer. Are you working directly with the CEO in order to see how many complaints have been made directly to him/her? Also, have you put in place or are you considering to put in place, Streetworks Improvement Plans such as Carmarthen Council have, to push for improvements through receiving a reduction in these.
- What is your reaction to Natural Resources for Wales (NRW) issuing WW with a warning in terms of not making improvements to its performance?
- Last year WW was severely penalized for misreporting of leakage figures/data. Please can you explain what happened here and what the consequences were for those responsible for this error?
- Looking at the source of the River Ogmore from Nantymoel to Ogmore-by-Sea, where has there been the most agricultural leaks and spillages?

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	Following responses to the above and other Members questions, it was <u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council noted the presentation by Welsh Water representatives, as referred to at paragraph 3.1 of the report.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

34. To receive announcements from:

Decision Made	The Deputy Mayor and the Chief Executive gave their announcements (see meeting recording below for further details).
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

35. To receive announcements by the Leader

Decision Made	The Leader gave his announcements (see meeting recording below for further details)
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

36. Revenue Budget Outturn 2023-24

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to provide Members with an update on the Council's revenue financial position for the year ended 31st March 2024.</p> <p>The Executive Summary of the report outlined the following key points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The net revenue budget for 2023-24 was £342.334 million. The overall outturn at 31st March 2024 was a net over spend of £7.054 million.• The overall over-spend on the Council budget is primarily due to ongoing pressures within the
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	<p>Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and in respect of Home to School Transport, Homelessness and Legal Fees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The budget approved for 2023-24 included budget reduction proposals totalling £2.608 million. At 31st March there was a shortfall on the savings target of £246,000, or 9.43% of the overall reduction target.• During 2023-24 Directorates drew down funding from specific earmarked reserves. The final draw down from revenue reserves was £12.186 million. An additional £6.952 million of other earmarked reserves also needed to be unwound to meet the in-year over spend, along with the transfer of £102,000 from the Council Fund. <p>The Leader advised that there were now in place regular in-house monthly meetings, revenue budget meetings, capital programme meetings and monitoring boards, so that the budget could be closely monitored, with the view to avoiding wherever possible, any overspends occurring within Directorates of the Council. He had asked CMB to ensure that Officers are working to 'essential spend only', in order to save Council finances.</p> <p>A number of questions were asked in terms of the detail of the report and supporting information contained in its appendices, that included as an example the following:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The figures in Quarter 1 show an overspend already across some Directorates, concern was raised about this so early in the financial year and how accurate were spending assumptions across Directorates of BCBC. There was a further concern expressed on how budgets were set and allocated;2. A Member stated that the revenue reserves were now below 5% and it was therefore important to build these back up. How are other neighbouring local authorities managing with their reserves, ie are they working below them or are they in a more healthy (or conversely, unhealthy) financial position regarding these. BCBC need to lobby Central Government requesting an increase in future settlements, given the financial strain the Council are going through due to the demand of key services, inflation, price rises for goods and services etc.3. The Deputy Leader advised that she had recently met with Jo Stevens MP, Secretary of State for Wales and was due soon to meet Huw Irranca Davies AM, in relation to seeking extra funding for the Council.4. A Member considered that the Authority should look to be more accurate in forecasting its funds moving forward, particularly towards year end, so as to look to reduce or eliminate any overspend such as that which was accrued in the last financial year. This would then result in no over reliance on reserves to plug any funding gap for essential services as a result of such overspend.5. A Member noted that some of the transportation and highway budget reductions outlined in the
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	<p>report had not been achieved due to the prioritisation of works in respect of the Welsh Government's introduction of 20mph speed restrictions affecting some roads comprised within the highway network. He noted that these would now look to be achieved this Autumn. He did raise some concern though, that these savings would not be made by the targeted date, if further work that may be required is undertaken on the 20mph speed restrictions across the County Borough.</p> <p>6. The overspend in Social Services seems to range on some programmes and projects from 55k to £2.28m, due to a high number of placements and an increase in need. It is also noted, that additional budget has been set aside for Children's Services, once more for an increase in service demands. How therefore, are we squaring the circle, ie Social Services is primarily and always has been a demand led service, versus the reality of having to cut our cloth appropriately to the limited funds we have and increasingly challenging funds also.</p> <p>Officers responded to the above questions, prior to it being,</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council noted the revenue outturn position for 2023-24.</p>
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

37. Capital Programme Outturn 2023-24 and Quarter 1 Update 2024-25

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change presented a report, which provided an update for Council on the capital programme outturn position for 2023-24, the quarter 1 spend and projected spend for 2024-25 as at 30 June 2024, the revised capital programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34 and the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2024-25.</p> <p>There were a number of appendices to the report, as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix A – which shows the budgets and spend for the individual schemes in 2023-24.• Appendix B – which reflected the budgets, spend to date and projected year end spend as at 30 June 2024 for the individual schemes in 2024-25.• Appendix C – which detailed the revised capital programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34.
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- Appendix D – which provided details of the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2024-25.

The Deputy Mayor following the presentation of the key points of the report by the Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change, invited questions from Members, with an extract of these including the following:-

- 1.) A Member asked for an explanation on what the virement was for upgrade works to Waterton Depot, he questioned whether the monies for this should be put instead into Capital Reserves;
- 2.) A Member queried the amount of money being set aside from the Capital Programme for wrapping and 'livery' costs in respect of the purchase of 5 new waste vehicles, at £4k per vehicle. He added that he could not support this level of cost;
- 3.) A Member asked if it was the intention of Cabinet and the Corporate Management Board to undertake a frank and robust assessment of what could be realistically taken forward in terms of schemes in the Capital Programme going forward as it was apparent that with existing and future budget restraints the programme needed to be slimmed down and scheduled on a priority basis;
- 4.) A Member noted that the Council were looking to purchase 5 new waste vehicles with an uncommitted budget some £906k, through a virement and borrowing proposal. He asked how many could be purchased without going down the virement and borrowing road. He added, was it imperative for these vehicles to be purchased now or could they wait until a future date;
- 5.) The Leader and Deputy Leader, in turn, advised that vehicles over 7.5 tonne had to have details of livery portrayed on them, or the Council would be breaching certain health and safety legislation, including the provision of cameras for pedestrian and road users safety;
- 6.) A Member noted from the report, that all of the capital project works planned for schools listed in the report indicated what works these would be, other than those proposed for Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg School, Llangynwyd. He therefore asked what the detail of these works were going to be at this school;
- 7.) A Member asked that similar reports in future contain where possible, contain outturn costs for each project proposed and listed within the Capital Programme. He also noted that last year the Council underspent significantly on the Capital Programme, given that of the £69m allocated the outturn had been £31.8m. He further noted that this we there was a proposal to spend in the region of £82m. He questioned therefore, if BCBC actually had sufficient finances available to support this level of spend.

Certain Members confirmed that they could not support the proposal to spend in the region of £20k on wrapping or livery of the new waste vehicles as referenced to in point 2.) above, so therefore Council eventually agreed following a motion that was duly seconded, to look to reduce this from what was proposed to what the Authority was required to provide legally, ie sign writing and other livery considered necessary in order to meet standard health and safety requirements. The recommendations of the report

39. To receive the following Questions from:

Decision Made	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Councillor G Walter to the Leader (response circulated previously to members). Councillor Walter exercised his right to ask a supplementary question2. Councillor I Williams to the Cabinet Member – Resources (response circulated previously to members). Councillor Williams exercised his right to ask a supplementary question.3. Councillor T Thomas to the Leader (response circulated previously to members). Councillor Thomas exercised his right to ask a supplementary question.4. Councillor M Williams to the Leader (response circulated previously to members). Councillor Williams exercised his right to ask a supplementary question.
Date Decision Made	No decision made.

40. Urgent Items

Decision Made	There were no urgent items.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

41. Exclusion of the Public

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>The following item is not for publication as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.</p> <p>Therefore, following the application of the public interest test, Council resolved pursuant to the Act to consider this item in private,</p>
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	and excluded the public from the meeting during such consideration.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024

42. Redundancy and Early Retirement Costs

Decision Made	This decision is exempt from publication.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2024.

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