

**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 16:00**

Present

Councillor H Griffiths – Chairperson

H T Bennett  
E L P Caparros  
P Davies  
RM Granville  
D M Hughes  
J Llewellyn-Hopkins  
HM Williams

A R Berrow  
N Clarke  
M J Evans  
GH Haines  
M R John  
J E Pratt  
E D Winstanley

F D Bletsoe  
RJ Collins  
N Farr  
D T Harrison  
M Jones  
JC Spanswick

JPD Blundell  
HJ David  
J Gebbie  
M L Hughes  
M Lewis  
JH Tildesley MBE

Present Virtually

S Aspey  
S J Griffiths  
R J Smith  
A Wathan  
MJ Williams

S J Bletsoe  
RM James  
I M Spiller  
A Williams  
R Williams

C L C Davies  
MJ Kearns  
T Thomas  
AJ Williams  
T Wood

P Ford  
W J Kendall  
G Walter  
I Williams

Apologies for Absence

W R Goode and P W Jenkins

Officers:

Nicola Echanis  
Mark Galvin  
Rachel Keepins  
Carys Lord  
Claire Marchant

Head of Education & Family Support  
Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees  
Democratic Services Manager  
Chief Officer - Finance, Housing & Change  
Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing

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

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Michael Pitman  
Alex Rawlin  
Zak Shell  
Mark Shephard  
Kelly Watson

Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services  
Corporate Policy & Performance Manager  
Head of Neighbourhood Services  
Chief Executive  
Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy

**Declarations of Interest**

**Minutes Silence**

Prior to considering the business of the Agenda, the Mayor confirmed with some considerable sadness, the passing on of ex-County Borough Councillor Julia Williams, mother of Councillor Alex Uberini-Williams, following a long illness. Julia he confirmed, had been a first class Councillor and had served the ward of Hendre admirably when she was formerly a Member of the local authority.

Tributes were paid to Julia in turn by Members, including the 3 political Group Leaders.

All those present in the meeting then stood for a minutes silence, as a mark of respect to Julia.

**43. Apologies for absence**

Decision Made	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors PJ Jenkins, WR Goode, the Corporate Director Communities and the Corporate Director Education, Early Years and Young People.
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**44. Declarations of Interest**

Decision Made	The following personal declarations of interest were made:-  Councillor E Winstanley – Items 6, 8, 10 and 11, as an employee of Awen Cultural Trust.  Councillor R Williams – Item 8 as he had been campaigning for some considerable time for the Pencoed
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	<p>Road Bridge and in relation to the refurbishment of Pencoed Library referenced to in the report. Item 11 as he was unsure if he was still in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance.</p> <p>Councillor H Bennett – Items 6 and 8, as an employer at BAVO which was mentioned in the reports relating to these items.</p> <p>Councillor M Evans - Item 8 as he had been campaigning for some considerable time for the Pencoed Road Bridge and in relation to the refurbishment of Pencoed Library referenced to in the report.</p> <p>Councillor W Kendall – Item 11, no reason given.</p> <p>Councillor J Pratt – Item 6 as a family member is in receipt of Social Care.</p> <p>Councillor R Smith – Item 6 as a family member was in receipt of Social Care and due to him having an interest in a company that is in receipt of funding from BAVO.</p> <p>Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing – Item 6 as a family member was in receipt of Social Care.</p>
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**45. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> That the Minutes of meetings of the Council dated 15 May and 24 July 2024, be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**46. To receive announcements from:**

Decision Made	Announcements were received from the following Cabinet Members and Chief Executive (No decisions required/made):-
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mayor;</li><li>• Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Social Services and Health;</li><li>• Chief Executive</li></ul>
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**47. To receive announcements by the Leader**

Decision Made	Announcements were received from the Leader (No decisions required/made)
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**48. Social Services Annual Report 2023/24**

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to present to Council the ‘Director of Social Services’ Annual Report for 2023/24 and request that Members endorse this; the analysis therein of the strengths and areas for improvement in Social Services and Wellbeing and the next steps set out.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader highlighted that despite some immense financial pressures in Social Services, the Council has some excellent facilities for children’s and adult services and the Deputy Leader had recently met with Mario Cleft from the Care Forum for Wales, who had been very complimentary of BCBC’s Adult Services team, adding that the workforce there were both engaging and energetic;</p> <p>Members raised several queries and comments as part of the debate including the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was noted in the presentation that there had been a 5% reduction from 29% to 24% for assessments for care and support plans, though there were still some considerable delays in processing social care packages and social care assessments, which in turn, resulted in delayed hospital admissions. Members asked therefore if they could have some details of figures in respect of the above outside of the meeting. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing</li></ul>
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Members and Officers made observations on the report, that included:

- Cabinet reported that efficiencies will be made going forward with an in-house service that the Council would not necessarily make if the contract continued to be given to a number of external contractors who cut grass in different areas of the County Borough. A lack of Council resources means that grass cutting by such external providers is not monitored sufficiently enough so as to ensure such grass cutting is taking place as frequently as it should be at certain locations. This then gives rise to complaints from residents in that area;
- Members commented that the report does not contain sufficient detail in terms of a comparison in costs between maintaining the contract externally as opposed to reverting it in-house. £340k is a considerable amount of capital revenue as a cost to make such a change in contract arrangements. The market needs to be the subject of further ‘testing’;
- Cabinet reported that the in-house service will not just cover grass cutting but other works such as litter picking and traffic management. It will bring together all green areas and not just cover grass cutting as the current external provision provides for. This will bring savings over the longer term and concentrate on improving wider issues such as the environment and biodiversity;
- As we are carrying a number of vacancies in the Communities Directorate, Members queried whether Officers were confident in ensuring that we will be able to recruit to any job positions that are intended to support the new in-house service;
- Members queried the estimated cost saving and the return on investment;
- Members queried whether there were other service areas in the Council where the estimated £340k for the purchase of equipment could be better placed from the Raven’s Court capital budget, that will also deliver a better return;
- Cabinet explained that the report has been submitted to Council at this time, as the Council needs to buy the necessary equipment for next years grass cutting and associated works in order to provide the works in-house;
- The Leader reported that weed spraying has increased significantly in cost through external contractors in recent years and this will be included within the in-house service therefore making a saving to the Authority;
- Members suggested that the proposal could result in efficiency if it came in-house, as there is often difficulty in knowing who owns certain areas of grassed areas and open space, so therefore external contractors could be grass cutting private land as opposed to those maintained by the Council;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members queried whether Sub-contracting externally been market tested in order to ensure that maintaining the contract out of house is not a cheaper option than bringing it in-house.</li> </ul> <p>As there were some Members against the proposals contained within the report, it was moved, seconded and agreed that an electronic vote be taken on the report's recommendations.</p> <p>The result of the vote was as follows:-</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>For</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Against</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Abstain</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">28</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> That Council agreed the proposed virement of £340,000 in the Capital Programme for the delivery of Urban and Rural Grass Cutting in-house, with funds being vired from the existing Ravenscourt Capital Programme budget.</p>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	28	18	0
<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>					
28	18	0					
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024						

**50. Self-Assessment 2023/24**

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Policy and Performance Manager introduced a report that covered the Council's 3rd self-assessment, for the period April 2023 to March 2024.</p> <p>The Leader advised that the report before Council today had also been considered by Cabinet yesterday.</p> <p>He felt that there may be scope in future such reports, to cutting back or modifying certain targets, particularly those relating to the Council's wellbeing objectives – maybe through reducing some of these.</p> <p>He added that further examination of performance indicators and commitments may be required, in order to establish if they are both appropriate and measureable. The Leader concluded by stating that it was important to give an open and honest opinion on our own performance as part of the Self-Assessment.</p> <p>A Member referred to page 168 of the report and of the importance of consultation with our residents and collating their feedback on aspects of the report, so that we can feedback any positive contributions into</p>
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	A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Penhale-Thomas
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**53. Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Mark John**

Decision Made	<p>Councillor John outlined a Notice of Motion, the wording of which was as follows:-</p> <p>‘This Council regrets the Westminster Government’s decision to cut the Winter fuel allowance which will leave many of the most vulnerable in our County Borough with the agonising decision to eat or heat their homes.</p> <p>We therefore wish to invite pensioners into our Civic offices in Angel Street during the Winter months where they can be assured of a safe warm space and hot drinks.</p> <p>We authorise Officers to make arrangements and report back to the next full Council meeting.’</p> <p>Members debated the motion and it was moved and duly seconded, that it be amended as follows:-</p> <p><b>‘This Council regrets the Westminster Government’s decision to cut the Winter fuel allowance which will leave many of the most vulnerable in our County Borough with the agonising decision to eat or heat their homes.</b></p> <p><b>So, we therefore invite any older person affected to take advantage of one of the many local community spaces such as community centres, libraries, warm hubs which are supported by this Council. We also recognise that pension credit is an underclaimed benefit and we encourage our residents to utilise the resources available via our commissioned support agencies a number of whom provide income maximisation services to support and complete relevant forms. That this Council uses its communication and engagement channels to raise awareness of the pension credit application process.</b></p> <p><b>We shall also signpost to trusted agencies and partners anyone struggling with their heating bills’.</b></p> <p>As certain Members objected to the amended motion immediately above, a vote was taken, the result of which was as follows:-</p>
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	<p><u>For (the amendment)</u></p> <p>32</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p>	<p><u>Against</u></p> <p>12</p>	<p><u>Abstain</u></p> <p>0</p>
	<p>That the amended Notice of Motion above in bold be approved, as a replacement to the motion proposed by Councillor John.</p>		
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024		

**54. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	There were no urgent items.
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**55. Exclusion of the Public**

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p>	<p>The minutes and report relating to the following item were not for publication as they contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation)(Wales) Order 2007.</p> <p>Following the application of the public interest test Council resolved pursuant to the Act to consider these items in private, with the public will being excluded from the meeting during such consideration.</p>
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024	

**56. Approval of Exempt Minutes**

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the exempt Minutes of a meeting of the Council dated 24 July 2024, be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	25 September 2024

**57. Redundancy and Early Retirement Costs**

Decision Made	The content of this minute is exempt and therefore not for publication
Date Decision Made	25 September 2025

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this link

The meeting closed at 19:30.