

Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 January 2026

Responses to Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

|  | Recommendations / Information Requested:  | Response:  | Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted: |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-27 to 2029-2030</b> |   |  |   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>                                     |   |  |   |
| 1  | The Committee made recommendations.   | Sent to Cabinet on 3 February 2026 for <a href="#">response</a> .  |   |
| <b>Additional Information Requested</b>                    |   |  |   |
| A  | <p><u>Council Tax – Second Homes</u><br/>The Committee discussed the Council’s Policy for second-home Council Tax charges and <b>requested:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the comparative information from other Local Authorities regarding their level of charges;</li> <li>b. whether they have reduced their rates;</li> <li>c. the impact on the number of second homes in their local authority area; and</li> <li>d. the impact that the increase in Bridgend’s charges has achieved.</li> </ul> | <p>On 20 September 2023 the Council minutes show:</p> <p><i>That Council approved the proposed 100% council tax premiums to be implemented from 1st April 2023 for long term empty homes, and 1st April 2024 for second homes, with these both increasing to 200% after 2 years.</i></p> <p>Consequently a 100% premium was implemented for second homes on 1 April 2024 and this will be increased to 200% on 1 April 2026 in line with the Council decision.</p> <p>In response to the specific questions:</p> <p>a) Comparative premium percentage information for 2025-26 and 2026-27 for second homes is attached below.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>CTAX Second Home Charges 260126.xlsx</p> </div> |   |

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|   |   | <p>b) Pembrokeshire is the only council who indicated that their % will be reducing from 150% to 125% from 01/04/26.</p> <p>c) WG Stats are attached. Numbers can reduce due to properties being let out long term or meeting the criteria to be eligible for business rates instead. However, sometimes the opposite happens as the VOA are constantly checking that the self-catering properties on business rates meet the criteria for the number of days a property is let and bring them back into council tax when the criteria is not met – hence increasing the number of second homes.</p> <div data-bbox="846 887 900 951" style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">WG Second Homes<br/>Stats.xlsx</p> <p>d) For 2025-26 we collected £163,000 from second home premiums, which supported the costs of our housing and homelessness strategies.</p> |   |
| B | <p><u>Energy Rates for Schools</u><br/>The Committee <b>requested</b> information regarding the projected cost of electric, gas and water for schools in the upcoming financial year and how it is envisaged that this will impact on schools' budgets.</p> | <p>BCBC's share of the Welsh Government additional school maintenance grant equates to £726,243. The funding is a capital grant and has been added to the Capital Programme approved by Council on the 4 February 2026.</p> <p>The grant has not yet been received.</p> <p>The grant relates to capital funding and does not impact on the budget pressure - the pressure relates to the additional revenue</p>  |   |

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|   |   | costs for schools associated with additional floor space, such as energy costs, cleaning and maintenance.  |   |
| C | <p><u>Budget Pressure – Additional Learning Needs (ALN)</u><br/>                     The Committee referred to the announcement from Welsh Government in December regarding a further £8.2m funding this year for ALN and <b>requested</b> the quantum of that funding allocated for Bridgend, when the funding was expected to be received and whether further grant funding was expected in year which could be offset against the recurring Budget Pressure.</p> | <p>The additional share of funding announced for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) for 2025-26 in relation to ALN was £279,942.</p> <p>The funding has not yet been received.</p> <p>The additional funding forms part of the overall Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) which for BCBC now totals £19.695 million for 2025-26. The element relating to ALN for 25/26 amounts to £1,754,644.</p> <p>The indicative 2026/27 LAEG has been received, and the indicative ALN element is £1,708,242 a reduction of £46,402.</p> <p>There are specific terms and conditions for the use of this grant.</p>   |   |
| D | <p><u>School Improvement</u><br/>                     The Committee referred to EDNEW 2, School Improvement, in the Emerging Directorate Pressures of £225k and that there was previously a £500k contribution towards Central South Consortium and <b>requested</b> that when the funding for disaggregating from the service is finalised, details of</p>   | <p>A budget pressure of £450K was approved by Council in February 2025 to support the transition and delivery of school improvement services following Welsh Government’s review of these services across Wales. As anticipated the majority of the functions provided by the Central South Consortium (CSC) are being delivered at a local authority level. This budget pressure was split over two financial years - £225K for 2025-26 and £225K for 2026-27. Council also approved a budget reduction proposal in February 2025 of £88K against the CSC core budget of £494K. As the budget reduction proposed is less than the budget pressure, there has not been a revenue saving.</p> |   |

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|          | whether the difference has resulted in a revenue saving.  |   |   |
| <b>E</b> | <p><u>School Maintenance</u><br/>The Committee referred to <i>SCHNEW 1, Building Maintenance</i> and the recent announcement from Welsh Government regarding an additional £20m funding for school maintenance and <b>requested</b> the quantum of that funding allocated for Bridgend, when the funding was expected to be received and the impact on this Emerging Directorate Budget Pressure.</p> | <p>BCBC's share of the Welsh Government additional school maintenance grant equates to £726,243. The funding is a capital grant and has been added to the Capital Programme approved by Council on the 4 February 2026.</p> <p>The grant has not yet been received.</p> <p>The grant relates to capital funding and does not impact on the budget pressure - the pressure relates to the additional revenue costs for schools associated with additional floor space, such as energy costs, cleaning and maintenance.</p> |   |
| <b>F</b> | <p><u>In-House Residential Provision – Children's Services</u><br/>The Committee referred to SSW 1 in the Emerging Directorate Pressures and <b>requested</b> a breakdown of the shortfall on Homes 1, 2 and three months of Home 3.</p>  | Confidential response shared with Members of the Committee.   |   |
| <b>G</b> | <p><u>Community Chest Sports Fund</u><br/>The Committee referred to <i>NEW 3, Sports Development</i>, in the Additional Final Settlement Budget Pressures and</p>   | £50,000 will be available in total. £1000 in any 12-month period to not-for-profit community sports clubs and groups to increase participation and improve, or sustain, grassroots sports. The funding will support projects that get more people, particularly   |   |

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|                                 | <b>requested</b> a breakdown of how much will be available for the Community Chest sports fund for match funding for Clubs, Community grants and awards.   | under-represented groups, to be more active, covering costs for equipment, coaching, and facility hire.   |   |
| H                               | <u>Transport – Bus Route Pilot Schemes</u><br>Members referred to COM 2 – Emerging Directorate Pressures and <i>NEW 6, Transport</i> , in the Additional Final Settlement Budget Pressures which both relate to the pilot schemes for new bus routes and the Committee <b>requested</b> details of the new proposed routes and the likely costs of the proposed schemes. | As was discussed at the COSC Meeting, there is a 100K allocation in the budget (2 x 50K) to work with Transport Providers to pilot new bus routes in Bridgend. This work is still ongoing with First Cymru, to look at which routes could be viable and the costs of this. When the information about these proposals are known, they will be shared with Scrutiny Members.                         |   |
| <b>Capital Strategy 2026-27</b> |  |   |   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>          |  |   |   |
| 2                               | The Committee discussed the accuracy and timeliness of data in the Quarterly Capital Programme reports to Council and <b>recommended</b> that consideration be given to the use  | Directorates are responsible for monitoring capital schemes, and the reporting of progress in the Capital Programme quarterly to Cabinet, and Council, as part of the Council's Budget Monitoring process and final outturn reports. The Capital Programme report is prepared on a quarterly basis using the latest information as provided by scheme managers. The report includes any significant | Partially Accepted                            |

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|   | <p>and inclusion of real time data and the timeliness of reporting. In particular, that any approved key projects, delays or additional spend on projects are included.</p>   | <p>changes including any newly approved schemes and slippage within the narrative of the report.</p> <p>The Council has agreed reporting timelines and any reports being presented to Cabinet and/or Council require to be prepared 4 weeks in advance of the meeting to allow for review and approvals prior to issue. Officers work to ensure the report is as up to date as possible based on the latest information they have at the time of preparing the report. It is necessary to report at a point in time to enable the report to be prepared and presented in line with the Council's agreed reporting timelines.</p> <p>The Council has agreed reporting timelines and any reports being presented to Cabinet and/or Council require to be prepared 4 weeks in advance of the meeting to allow for review and approvals prior to issue. Officers work to ensure the report is as up to date as possible based on the latest information they have at the time of preparing the report. It is necessary to report at a point in time to enable the report to be prepared and presented in line with the Council's agreed reporting timelines.</p> |   |
| 3 | <p>The Committee <b>recommended</b> that visual infographics are included, e.g. flowcharts, diagrams, etc. demonstrating how projects are instigated, the approvals process for a project to be accepted for the Capital Programme and how return on investment or the revenue impact of a project is assessed.</p> | <p>A flowchart has been included in the updated Capital Strategy to be presented to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February. The Strategy will be reviewed during 2026-27 and where possible additional visual infographics will be included.</p>  | Accepted                                      |

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| 4 | <p>The Committee expressed concern regarding foreseeable delays or slippage in the delivery of Capital Programmes and <b>recommended</b> that all projects receive robust sign-off and that project management is standardised across all projects and programmes to ensure the correct escalation points take place at the right times.</p>   | <p>Noted.</p> <p>Schemes should not be added to the capital programme until funding is confirmed, excepting a number of rolling programme schemes that have been agreed on an on-going basis, such as the Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme. Some schemes will be delayed due to unforeseen issues and as a result will be reprofiled as the programme progresses.</p> <p>Council has now agreed funding to support the transformation work to be undertaken in the Authority. A priority for the new team will be to review and standardise all project management paperwork and to ensure clear escalation points are agreed and enforced.</p> |   |
| 5 | <p>The Committee referred to Cabinet's response to Recommendation 3 from the Scrutiny Budget Working Group which was accepted but the narrative response did not indicate any further action would be taken and <b>recommended</b> that as part of the proposed transformation growth, consideration be given to how Capital Programmes in other Local Authorities and organisations are managed to explore best practice and to</p> | <p>Noted.</p> <p>This will be part of the review of the management of the large programmes to be introduced as part of the transformation work, referred to above.</p>  |   |

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|   | evaluate, inform and improve Bridgend's approach.   |   |   |
| <b>Requests for Additional Information:</b> |   |   |   |
| 6   | <u>Net Zero 2030 Commitment</u><br>The Committee <b>requested</b> how much of the total of the Capital Programme of £303m, is allocated to the achievement of the Net Zero 2030 Commitment. | It is anticipated that schemes within the capital programme need to take account of the Net Zero 2030 Commitment as part of the scheme development and so the costs inherent with the Commitment will be encapsulated within the overall scheme cost and not necessarily separately identified. There are a number of schemes within the programme that are specifically related to Net Zero including Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle Transformation, Fleet Transformation Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles, Net Zero Carbon Fleet, and 2030 Decarbonisation. These are specific projects totalling £1.666 million, however this does not represent the likely total cost of decarbonisation as, for example, the design of a new building would include decarbonisation within the overall scheme cost. |   |
| 7   | <u>Risk Management</u><br>The Committee <b>requested</b> sight of the risk registers and other illustrative examples of risk management of Capital Projects.                                | Examples have been confidentially shared with Members of the Committee.   |   |
| <b>Forward Work Programme Update</b>        |   |   |   |
| 8   | The Committee requested that the following items be added to their Forward Work Programme:<br>a. Council's Preparedness to Respond to Storms and Adverse Weather to                         | To be actioned by Scrutiny, Chair of Committee and relevant Corporate Director(s) and scheduled in Work Planning Meetings.  |   |

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|  | include the Council's Strategy regarding Flood Response and Prevention;<br>and<br>b. Quarterly Updates from the Transformation Programme Board once established. |                  |  |