

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON WEDNESDAY, 18 MARCH 2015 AT 3.00PM

Present:

Councillor G Thomas - Mayor and Chairperson

S Aspey	E M Hughes	H E Morgan	G Thomas
M W Butcher	R M James	L C Morgan	M Thomas
N Clarke	R D Jenkins	M E J Nott OBE	R Thomas
H J David	P John	A D Owen	J H Tildesley MBE
G Davies	B Jones	D G Owen	H J Townsend
P A Davies	C L Jones	D R Pugh	E Venables
E Dodd	R C Jones	C E Rees	C Westwood
D K Edwards	M Jones	C Reeves	H M Williams
E P Foley	D R W Lewis	M Reeves	R Williams
C A Green	J E Lewis	C E Smith	M Winter
M Gregory	J R McCarthy	J C Spanswick	R E Young
D M Hughes			

Officers:

D Mephram	- Chief Executive
D McMillan	- Corporate Director - Education and Transformation
M Shephard	- Corporate Director - Communities
N Young	- Corporate Director - Resources and Section 151 Officer
S Cooper	- Corporate Director - Wellbeing
C Turner	- Head of Safeguarding and Family Support
J Parsons	- Development and Building Control Manager
K Watson	- Group Manager - Legal
G P Jones	- Head of Democratic Services (Electronic Support)
J Monks	- Democratic Services Officer - Committees

458 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor G W Davies MBE	Holiday
Councillor L Ellis	- Unwell
Councillor C J James	- Unwell
Councillor P James	- Unwell
Councillor G Phillips	- Attending a Funeral
Councillor D Sage	- Recuperating
Councillor K J Watts	- Holiday
Councillor D White	- Other Council Business
Councillor P White	- Recuperating

459 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of meetings of Council held on the 21st January and the 25th February 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record, subject to Councillor R Thomas being recorded as being present at both meetings and Councillor J H Tildesley being recorded as being present at the meeting held on the 25th February 2015.

460 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a prejudicial interest under Item 7 - Pay Policy Statement 2015/16, as they each had a family member(s) employed by the Authority. Those Members, and all Officers who were present, left the meeting during this item:

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>
M W Butcher	D M Hughes	B Jones	J C Spanswick
G Davies	R M James	D R Pugh	H J Townsend
C A Green			

Councillor H J Townsend also declared a personal interest under Item 9 – Councillor David Sage, as she is a relative of his.

461 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that last week's Mayor's Citizenship Awards event had been one of the highlights of his year as Mayor. The annual event had awarded some outstanding volunteers, charity champions and other local heroes who had made a positive impact in the communities within the Borough. There were a total of 17 individual winners and seven groups, consisting of all ages and from all walks of life, ranging from volunteer Claire Edmunds who had set up a group to support the families of children with special needs in the Llynfi Valley, to Nantyfyllon Primary School caretaker Brian Morgan who goes far beyond the call of duty for the school's pupils.

The Mayor advised that the event had given the Authority the opportunity to say thank you and give them the appreciation they deserved. He thanked the Leader for hosting the event and all those who put forward nominations. A selection of the winners was published in the latest edition of the Bridgemembers newsletter.

The Mayor informed Members of the celebrations which had taken place across 53 nations last week to commemorate Commonwealth Day. To mark the occasion the Authority raised the Commonwealth flag in a special event outside the Civic Offices. He thanked all those who had taken part in the event.

The Mayor declared his appreciation for the support Members had given to his charity events over the last year. He announced a forthcoming fundraising event to be held on Friday, 27th March at Archbishop McGrath RC High School in Brackla, commencing at 7.00pm with tickets priced at £10. The event will feature The Hennessey's and other local talents.

The Mayor informed Members that he had accepted a petition from Friends of the Earth Cymru earlier today regarding the issue of fracking. He advised that the petition would be referred to the relevant Council departments for their attention. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that the petition was objecting to existing and all future applications for a licence to commence drilling, including fracking.

The Mayor announced the retirement after eight years with the Authority of Jeannie Monks, Democratic Services Officer and Emma Andrews, Democratic Services Assistant who is moving on after 19 years with the Authority. Finally, the Mayor announced that Ruth Ronan was recently appointed as Senior Democratic Services Officer. On behalf of Members he thanked Jeannie and Emma for their hard work, and congratulated Ruth on her new role.

462 CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) Cabinet Member – Children and Young People

The Cabinet Member – Children and Young People informed Members that this Thursday morning, 15,000 school journeys were expected to have been made across the Borough by

bike and scooter as part of the National Big Pedal competition. Since the beginning of the month, schools have been competing to see who can clock up the most number of pupils travelling to school in a more active way as part of a competition organised by the cycling charity Sustrans, and supported locally by the Authority. He informed Members that within the Borough Coychurch Primary School is currently leading the way and is also amongst the top 100 schools in Wales. The three-week contest will conclude on Friday morning with a special 'Superhero' event which will see youngsters decorating their bikes and scooters and dressing up as their favourite caped crusaders. He advised that this was an excellent initiative which encouraged children and families to find greener modes of travel, whilst keeping fit and healthy. The winners can be found by visiting www.bigpedal.org.uk.

The Cabinet Member – Children and Young People then announced that Porthcawl Comprehensive School had enjoyed some very well deserved news after school inspectors from Estyn described it as an example of best practice in leadership, partnership working and strategic partnerships, especially around work that had been carried out in helping new pupils acclimatise and settle into their new school. Using questionnaires developed by the National Review of Behaviour and Attendance, the school plans support for individual pupils who are about to begin their secondary education, identifies ones who are anxious or who may require further reassurance, then sets up programmes specifically geared towards building up their confidence or social and organisational skills.

He advised that as part of this, the school also works closely with parents, guardians and carers, and goes the extra mile in organising additional school visits, all of which are designed to help the pupils overcome their concerns, and make sure that they have the opportunity to meet all of the teachers who will play key roles in ensuring their smooth transition from primary school. He commented that it was excellent to see the school's efforts recognised in this manner, and on behalf of Members he would pass on their congratulations and appreciation.

He congratulated Dominic Manetta-Jones, a former pupil of Brynteg Comprehensive School and current Cambridge student, who has been named winner of the Gorowny Jones Prize by the Institute of Physics, after scoring the highest mark in Wales in his A-Level Physics examination. Thanks to his exceptional hard work and dedication, Dominic is the first-ever student from Brynteg to have won this prestigious accolade, and he hoped that there would be more young people leading the way in the future.

Finally, he congratulated Isobel Dodd on her recent performance at the Welsh Athletic Championships. Isobel, who represented Glamorgan Valleys, became Welsh Champion and also made it through to the 800 metre final representing Wales. Isobel is also Bridgend's 1km Lifesaving Champion.

(2) Cabinet Member - Resources

The Cabinet Member – Resources announced that the next pre-Council briefing, due to take place on the 8th April, will be on European Funding. The aim is to provide Members with information on the next generation of EU funding programmes which the Authority is eligible for, to advise on the preparations being made with regional partners and to ensure that the Borough benefits from these resources.

He informed Members that on the 30th March there will be Treasury Management Training for Members who sit on the Audit Committee. The training will provide a more comprehensive overview of the changes to Banking Regulations and the implications of this on the Authority's current investment approaches and options.

A Young Carers event will take place at 10.00am on the 27th March to provide Members with some background information on young carers and the young carers' measure. Colleagues from Action for Children will deliver an overview of the young carers' project, and two young carers will talk about their experiences, followed by a questions and

answers session. He advised that the aim of the presentation was to raise awareness of young carers' issues and explain how the Authority addresses them.

Finally, he announced three workshops, scheduled for April, to be given by the Chief Executive on "Shaping the Future". Dates and times have been placed in Member's calendars and it would be appreciated if Councillors could accept or decline as appropriate.

(3) Cabinet Member - Strategic Change

The Cabinet Member – Strategic Change announced that Carnegie House and the former Victoria Inn, both of which are listed buildings located within Bridgend town centre, are set to receive a fresh new look thanks to the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). The stonework to the front of Carnegie House's façade, balustrade, pilasters and balcony will be repaired following a successful Council bid for Heritage Lottery funding. The restoration work is due to start this week and will take around three months to complete.

Meanwhile, the Grade II listed Victoria Inn public house building on Adare Street, which has been vacant for several years, is being repaired so that it can be brought back into use for a new business venture. Work has already begun and is due to take approximately 12 months to complete.

He reported that the adjoining property at 7 Adare Street is also being restored along with two addresses at Elder Street Cottages, complementing the major public realm regeneration works that were completed last summer at Elder Street and Elder Yard. The work will be the latest in the THI programme which has already delivered £1.5m of Heritage Lottery funding for buildings in Dunraven Place, Wyndham Street, Market Street, Queen Street and Elder Street.

A further scheme has also been agreed for the re-carving and re-bedding of some of the commemorative plaques at the War Memorial in Dunraven Place, together with stone cleaning and the addition of new flagpoles. He advised that further updates will be announced as this work progresses.

Finally, he announced that in addition to the refurbishment work on the front of Carnegie House, the official transfer of the former library building over to Bridgend Town Council (BTC) has been confirmed. BTC is taking on the freehold of the building as a 'community asset transfer' and the move will mean that Carnegie House will be retained for public use for the benefit of the community and as an Arts Hub. He advised that this was a positive move for the economic, social and cultural life of the Borough, and the cooperation between BCBC and BTC in finding innovative ways of working together in the future.

463 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chief Executive announced that unconditional contracts were recently exchanged with Bridgend based Edwards Construction for the sale, demolition and redevelopment of the Authority's Sunnyside offices. The submitted proposal will ultimately establish a brand new private residential care home and extra care facility at the site, which will offer a mix of residential, nursing, home care and elderly mental illness care. Subject to planning approval, it is anticipated that works to demolish the existing Sunnyside office building will begin within the next couple of months, and the construction of the care home is expected to be completed by autumn 2016.

He reported that in the meantime, the Sunnyside office will continue to be open to members of the public until the 31st March 2015. Many Council services that were offered there have already transferred to the Civic Offices, and any remaining services and staff are in the process of moving across. He advised that the proposals will not affect the Ty'Ardd building which will continue to act as a base for Bridgend Register Office and the Local and Family History Centre.

He advised that the sale of Sunnyside is a key part of the Authority's plan to reduce three main Council offices in Bridgend town centre down to two, thereby making much more efficient use of office space as well as achieving significant financial savings.

He informed Members that plans for the redevelopment of the Sunnyside site are available via the planning application pages at www.bridgend.gov.uk and further updates will be announced as the project develops.

The Chief Executive announced that Trustees are being recruited to develop the new not-for-profit Cultural Trust to run a range of services and facilities throughout the Borough. Porthcawl's Grand Pavilion, Maesteg Town Hall, Bryngarw House and Country Park and Blaengarw Workmen's Hall will all form part of the Trust, along with the entire library service, some community centres and two work-based projects for adults with learning disabilities. He advised that as the Trustees will be responsible for steering the Trust at a strategic level, they will be required to possess the relevant skills and expertise to support the management team, which would be crucial to the success of the organisation.

He advised Members that an open evening for anyone who would like to know more about becoming a Trustee will be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 1st April at Bryngarw House.

Applications for becoming a Trustee must be submitted by Monday, 13th April and further details regarding the Trustee application pack can be found in the Bridgemembers newsletter.

464 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader announced that over the past six years, the Authority had seen significant and sustained improvement in the delivery of help and support to homeless people across the Borough, first under the portfolio of Councillor John Spanswick and currently under Councillor Phil White with support from Scrutiny.

He was delighted to report that this year for the first time; the Authority had not had to house any homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation. This was the result of more effective homeless prevention, making more appropriate housing options available and more effective partnership working with registered landlords. He advised that this course of action had also delivered significant cost savings for the Authority, and compared to 50 homeless families with children being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation in 2008-9, was a tremendous achievement.

The Leader announced that the historic Jennings Building on Porthcawl seafront is to be brought back into use following a successful bid for the conversion and redevelopment of the building by South Wales based developers ABA Holdings.

Plans have been submitted for the Grade II listed building, which will include a 'theatre' style kitchen restaurant complete with a full height atrium, as well as further smaller café and food establishments with views overlooking the sea. In addition, thirteen units will be created on the first floor which will combine office space suitable for small creative industries, together with a loft bedroom area on the mezzanine floor. The proposals are subject to planning approval, but if successful the venture will open in autumn 2016, create up to 30 local jobs during construction and more than 80 permanent jobs once completed.

465 TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Question from Councillor M Jones for the Cabinet Member – Children and Young People:

"In light of a recent damning report by Louise Casey which found that Rotherham Council was not fit for purpose regarding its responsibility to protect children, could the Cabinet Member for Children's Services please explain what we do protect our children".

Response from the Cabinet Member - Children to the question from Councillor M Jones

“Thank you for your timely question, as Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day took place on the 16th March 2015. A response has been prepared with the assistance of Officers and Senior Managers and I have arranged for an additional briefing paper to be made available to you on what went wrong in Rotherham in terms of management. The briefing also provides an overview of systems and processes that we adopted in Bridgend in order to take a proactive stance where we believe children are at risk of child sexual exploitation. It is a terrible and destructive crime and in light of this the Authority works with the Police and all other relevant agencies to identify those children at risk and works with victims of abuse in order to take appropriate action against the perpetrators. However, protecting our most vulnerable children in Bridgend is not just a priority for the CSS and Police, but everybody’s responsibility whether you are a teacher, social worker, member of the public or a member of this Authority, we all have a duty to report any concerns about the safety and protection of any child. Child sexual exploitation is a complex subject and I had already asked the Head of Service to develop bespoke Member training, inviting the Police, the charity Barnados and other partners in Bridgend. We need to increase our understanding of this very important issue and to assure ourselves as Members that there are proper safeguards in place to protect our children. A report will be made to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7th April 2015 on child sexual exploitation, with evidence of action already being undertaken to deal with and prevent the exploitation”.

Supplementary question from Councillor M Jones

“Thank you and also the author of the 13 page response to the question which reflected the importance and seriousness of child sexual exploitation.

“I understand that the Safeguarding Business Plan of the Corporate Director – Education and Transformation was currently under review and is a work in progress. Can we be reassured that lessons learned will be considered in this plan?”

Response from the Cabinet Member – Children and Young People

“The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing is working hard on the business plan and will take on board Councillor Jones’ points”.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that child sexual exploitation would be included as a priority in the business plan and was already a priority in the Western Bay Safeguarding Board business plan.

A Member asked what access the Police would have at weekends and out of hours to the records held by Social Services in the event that a child at risk presents at an Accident and Emergency department (A&E), or is picked up.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support advised that arrangements are in place involving a 24/7 link-up with the Police for access to the management database; also an emergency duty team have access to the DRAIG computer system so that there is always synergy of information being shared. When a child presents at A&E, the hospital has automatic access to the Child Prevention register to establish whether the child is known. He added that it was a joint approach and it was important to hold monthly peer reviews to discuss incidents which had taken place outside hours in order to ensure that the systems and processes in place continued to be robust and effective.

The Cabinet Member – Children and Young People requested that Members make every effort to attend the Member Development Training Session on Child Sexual Exploitation. He also encouraged members to contact him or the Corporate Director of Social Services or the Head of Safeguarding and Family Support with any further questions or queries.

466 PAY POLICY STATEMENT – 2015/16

The Officers in attendance left the meeting in accordance with the declaration made in minute 460.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. Approved the updated Pay Police Statement attached at Appendix A.
2. Approved the proposals outlined in paragraph 4.10 and 4.11 of the report.

Officers were then readmitted and advised of the outcome.

467 DEPARTURE PLANNING APPLICATION P/14/763/FUL

The Development and Building Control Manager reported that the proposal is a full application for the refurbishment and extension of the existing Grade II listed former Rest Convalescent Home, located in Rest Bay, Porthcawl. The proposal would involve the demolition of a number of modern extensions and single storey outbuildings, the development of new residential accommodation to the rear of the listed building and strategic landscaping/car parking.

He informed Members that the Rest Convalescent Home has been closed for the past few years and was considered to be at risk if not maintained, with the danger of further deterioration. As there was no longer a need for a convalescent home it was necessary for the developers to resubmit an application. The site is located outside the settlement boundary of Porthcawl and is a departure from the adopted Local Development Plan. He advised that the proposal would provide the opportunity to restore the building which is an historical backdrop to Porthcawl. Legislation dictates that the Authority must have due regard to preserve its setting and therefore there remains sufficient justification in the public interest to allow the development. He described how additional wings, which had been approved by Cadw, would consist of a mix of traditional and contemporary styles and would be compatible with the historical building, with no material change. Members were handed leaflets showing the prospective development.

He concluded by informing Members that the development would require a Section 106 agreement towards affordable housing and improvement of active travel between Rest Bay and Porthcawl.

A Member requested that local Ward Members be kept up to date with discussions regarding the issue of transport between Rest Bay and the town.

Councillor Brian Jones requested that it be noted that he was not in favour of the application.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. Approved planning application P/14/763/FUL subject to the conditions contained in the report.
2. Approved that the Corporate Director – Communities be given plenary powers to issue a decision notice in respect of the proposal once the applicant has entered into a Section 106 Agreement requiring the following:
 - i. Provide the sum of £370,000 as an off-site contribution towards the provision of affordable housing;
 - ii. Provide the sum of £63,163.62 to improve active travel access between Rest Bay and Porthcawl town centre or extending the limited transport service which serves the site in a staggered/phased payment plan which would see £30,000 being paid upon the

occupation of the first unit of residential accommodation within the site, and the remaining £33,163.62 (or the remainder of the index linked sum) paid upon occupation of 50% of the apartments or exactly 3 years after receipt of the first instalment, unless otherwise approved in writing.

468 COUNCILLOR DAVID SAGE

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to advise Members that the Deputy Leader, Councillor Sage, had not attended meetings of the Authority for a period approaching six consecutive months, and is seeking Council's approval of the reason for his absence in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Group Manager – Legal advised that Councillor Sage last attended a Committee meeting on the 16th October 2014. In accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, a Council Member who is unable to attend meetings of the Authority for a period of six consecutive months, ceases to be a Member of the Authority, unless the reason for the failure to attend has been approved by Council before the expiry of the period. The period of six consecutive months is due to expire on the 15th April 2015.

The Leader informed Members that both he and Councillor Spanswick visited Councillor Sage last Saturday and advised that his discharge date from hospital is the 2nd April 2015. He reported that Councillor Sage's rehabilitation was going well and would be continued on his return home. The Leader advised that Councillor Sage had expressed his good wishes and appreciation to everyone for their support.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the reason for Councillor Sage's continued absence from formal meetings for a period of 6 months.

425 INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to inform Council of the information reports which had been published since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That Council acknowledged the publication of the documents listed in the report:

<u>Title of Report</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
Urgent Delegated Decisions	Monitoring Officer	11 th March 2015
Polling Districts, Polling Places and Station Review	Electoral Returning Officer	11 th March 2015

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.