

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 14 JULY 2015 AT 2.30 PM

Present

Councillor MEJ Nott OBE – Leader and Chairperson

Councillors

HJ David	Deputy Leader
M Gregory	Cabinet Member Resources
HJ Townsend	Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities
PJ White	Cabinet Member Adult Social Care
HM Williams	Cabinet Member Communities

Officers:

Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director - Education & Transformation
Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Randal Hemingway	Head of Finance & ICT
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Kelly Watson	Group Manager Legal & Democratic Services
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer

720. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Member / Officers for the reasons so stated:

Councillor CE Smith – Holiday
Darren Mepham – Chief Executive – Other Council Business
Ness Young – Corporate Director Resources & Section 151 Officer– Leave
Mark Shephard – Corporate Director Communities – Leave
Andrew Jolley – Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Regulatory Services & Monitoring Officer - Other Council Business

721. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

722. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 14 July 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record.

723. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-17 TO 2019-20

The Head of Finance and ICT reported on an update on the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2016-17 to 2019-20.

He stated that the MTFS is set within the context of UK economic and public expenditure plans, Welsh Government priorities influencing settlements and legislation which defines the scope the Council has to raise income from council tax and to borrow for capital expenditure. It also includes all elements of the Council's financial strategy for the next four years, with emphasis on planned budget reductions and development of the Bridgend Change Programme and encompasses the Capital Strategy to ensure that

capital investment proposals are prioritised and evaluated in accordance with asset management principles and contribute towards the Council achieving its strategic and service priorities.

The Head of Finance and ICT informed Cabinet that the Public Services Minister had published proposals to reduce the number of councils in Wales from 22 to 8 or 9 councils, with it being proposed that Bridgend would merge with Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil Councils. He stated that this represented a significant change both from the Williams Commission proposals and the voluntary merger put forward by Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan. In the absence of any certainty, the Council's financial plans must be predicated on delivery of reductions against current budgets, including collaborative efforts with existing neighbouring authorities where practical and savings and or service improvements can be delivered. He stated that as no further information on likely funding levels had been received from the Welsh Government, the current budget reduction targets for 2016-17 to 2018-19 would remain, with a similar reduction for 2019-20, based on a scenario of a continued reduction in Aggregate External Funding of -4.5%.

The Head of Finance and ICT informed Cabinet of the impact of the recent Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget on 8 July 2015, which for the Council would result in a cost pressure due to the rise in the minimum wage from £7.20 per hour to £9.00 per hour.

The Head of Finance and ICT reported that Directors had reviewed existing budget reduction proposals and he set out the risk status of the current proposals which over the four years of the MTFS was estimated at £25.953m. He stated that Directorates were currently reviewing budgets and working to identify further reductions to meet the budget shortfalls identified. A series of staff engagement events would be held during July and August to communicate and receive feedback on the revised corporate priorities. This would be followed by a public consultation during September / October to seek feedback on corporate priorities and budget reductions.

The Head of Finance and ICT informed Cabinet that the Council would have to make revenue budget reductions of £49,592m from 2016-17 to 2019-20, of which, 23,639m had been identified, with £25,953m to be found.

The Cabinet Member Resources thanked the officers of the Finance Department in meeting the commitments of the MTFS.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the work being undertaken in developing the Medium Term Financial Strategy, including the development of £25.953 million of new budget reduction proposals and plans for public consultation on the corporate strategy and MTFS in the autumn.

724. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015-16 TO 2024-25**

The Head of Finance and ICT reported on an update on the Capital Programme and sought approval to present a report to Council for a revised capital programme for 2015-16 to 2024-25.

He informed Cabinet that Council in February 2015 had approved a capital programme for 2014-15 to 2024-25 of £153,014m, and he highlighted changes to the programme to reflect funding changes to some schemes, slippage from 2014-15, additional external funding approvals and changes to expenditure profiles.

He reported that a number of schemes for which funding had been identified, required approval for inclusion in the capital programme on the Shopmobility; Joint Vehicle Maintenance; West Park Primary School and Studio 34 schemes. He informed Cabinet that a revised capital programme allowing for the proposed changes along with anticipated slippage from 2014-15, additional external funding approvals and changes to expenditure profiles.

The Head of Finance and ICT reported that if there was insufficient funding from clawback the £250k for the provision of a temporary classroom at West Park Primary School is funded from the School Modernisation Retention.

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation informed Cabinet of the position regarding school surpluses which could be claw backed and that she would be meeting Head Teachers next week to discuss school surpluses.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved that the Capital Programme is submitted to Council for approval and if there was insufficient funding from clawback the £250k for the provision of a temporary classroom at West Park Primary School be funded from the School Modernisation Retention budget.

725. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

The Head of Finance and ICT sought approval for proposals to both improve the pace and extend the number of Community Asset Transfers (CAT).

He stated that Community Asset Transfer has been undertaken in line with the Asset Management Plan 2021; Community Asset Transfer Guidance Document and in response to a request from a community group or Town and Community Council. There had been a number of successful Community Asset Transfers and in some cases a transfer of the asset offered an opportunity to maintain and preserve valuable community services. A Task and Finish Group chaired by the Corporate Director Resources had been established to review the Council's approach to CAT with the aim of increasing the pace and the number of transfers and he outlined the recommendations of that Group.

The Head of Finance and ICT informed Cabinet that the priorities will be based on the agreed MTFS proposals and on what is deemed to be likely to fall out of future MTFS proposals for 2017/18 onwards. He stated that at this stage due diligence was required in respect of all potential assets to identify any legal or other issues that may impact ability for transfer. It was intended to publish for consultation in September 2015 a priority list describing specific assets in order to invite expressions of interest. The initial list was likely to give priority to assets that are directly linked to proposals in the approved MTFS; the list would be approved by the Corporate Directors Resources and Communities.

The Head of Finance and ICT reported that in the current Guidance had been updated in order to support the transfer process. He stated that up to £200k had been set aside in the Change Management Earmarked Reserve to fund a fixed term dedicated CAT Officer post for 3 years and to meet additional legal and property requirements.

The Cabinet Member Resources commented that he was very pleased to see the proposals for the development of Community Asset Transfers and that a number of assets had already been successfully transferred to Town and Community Councils. The Cabinet Member Communities commented that the proposal is a step forward in

terms of assisting organisations with managing assets at a time of budget pressures.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved;

1. the recommendations at paragraph 4.1 of the report;
2. the prioritisation of assets for possible transfer based on MTFS proposals;
3. the revised CAT Guidance for consultation;
4. the funding proposals to facilitate future CAT and a report be presented to Council to approve the necessary addition to the Capital Programme.

726. REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEALS

The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed Cabinet of a series of reports and initiatives looking to develop the economic prospects of South East Wales by taking forward the concept of cities working with their region to drive growth by harnessing all assets and opportunities. He stated that the changing global economy requires local authorities and other stakeholders to change the way they respond to supporting the local economy.

He reported that the growth of the City Region concept provides an approach which is being used elsewhere in the UK and Europe, and if the South East Wales Councils did not respond they risk being left further behind in terms of economic growth and opportunity. The participation by Bridgend in the City Region discussion and development will ensure that benefits derived by the approach will be secured for the County Borough and for the other communities in the region. He stated that the recent announcement by the Welsh Government that proposed Bridgend merges with Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr County Borough Councils further confirms Bridgend's place as an integral part of the Cardiff Capital City Region. It was potentially well placed to benefit from the City Region approach due to its unique location between Cardiff and Swansea; its importance to the Cardiff capital region; its strength as a business location for new and existing business and its attractive environment and diverse mix of urban and rural living. The City Region approach could generate major infrastructural investment especially rapid transport systems and help strengthen the County Borough's attraction as a location to live, work and invest in new opportunities.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services reported that there had been a move across the UK towards an economic concept by linking the city to the region. He stated that as part of the City Region discussion in Wales, the Welsh Government had announced two City Regional Boards to take the concept forward, namely the Cardiff Capital Region and the Swansea Bay Region. The Powering the Welsh Economy report published by the Cardiff Capital Region Board provided a wide-ranging view of how the region might develop in the future and concentrated on three main policy themes of Connectivity; Skills and Innovation and Growth.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services reported that running in parallel with the Cardiff Capital Region board development had been an initiative led by Cardiff Council to develop a City Deal for the region. This initiative provides bespoke agreements between government and cities which empower localities to drive economic growth by providing additional freedoms and resources. In return the UK Government will seek new governance arrangements with the aim of devolving control to cities.

He reported there had been a series of meetings with Leaders and senior officers across the Cardiff Capital Region to discuss proposals for City Deal with in principle support having been given by all Councils, subject to discussion by their Cabinets. He stated that the proposal was very much at the feasibility stage and the benefits to Bridgend would need to be evaluated. Although it was vital that Bridgend is involved and participates at an early stage. A fundamental issue for Bridgend will be whether a City Region approach and specifically a City Deal based on major infrastructural investment, promotion of central business districts, and creation of modern creative/cultural institutions will create growth, in particular economic sectors that spread into poorer communities. At this stage, Cabinet was requested to commit to this process but acknowledging that future participation will depend on the Council being comfortable that there will be significant economic benefit to Bridgend and that further major financial commitment would be required if that was so.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services also reported that alongside the release of the Cardiff Capital Region report was an initiative driven by the cities of Bristol, Cardiff and Newport, taking the city regional discussion in South Wales onto a UK level. At this stage, Bridgend was being asked to acknowledge the development of the Great Western Cities initiative as part of the whole regional approach to economic growth.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services concluded that the Cardiff Capital Region drew heavily on the Welsh Government's own economic framework, with the emphasis on supporting priority growth sectors. However, in the region approximately 60% of employment is outside of the priority growth sectors and there is a need to support all employment sectors to reflect the local economy. At the same time, the implementation of the Metro's integrated transport strategy could bring many benefits for the region; however, unless the total number of accessible jobs increased in the region, there would be limited economic gains for the significant investment. He stated that of concern is that the current version of the metro map omitted existing transport opportunities such as Pyle, the Ogmore Valley, Garw Valley and the upper Llynfi Valley, where social exclusion and deprivation in the County Borough is at its highest. He added that it was important that the Council has the opportunity to try to influence key strategic decisions where there is a direct impact on Bridgend.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed Cabinet that there is a compelling economic argument for the Council to engage and support the Cardiff Capital Region and the Great Western Cities discussion, whilst also actively developing the City Deal proposal. A contribution of £47k was sought towards developing a bid which could secure up to £1bn for the region.

The Leader commented on the importance of supporting the concept which had the potential to deliver excellent economic opportunities for the County Borough. The Cabinet Member Communities informed Cabinet that the concept also presented an opportunity for the Council to be part of an influential group in order to unlock significant prosperity and investment for the County Borough. The Deputy Leader commented on the commitment by the Secretary of State for Wales to the City Deal concept and on the significant difference which had already been made by existing City Deals in terms of delivering Gross Value Added and jobs in Manchester and Leeds. He stated that the Finance and Government Business Minister had recently underscored the Welsh Government's commitment to the concept which would be funded by the UK Government and delivered by 10 local authorities working with the Welsh Government and key partners. He informed Cabinet that the concept was not solely about improving transportation but also about developing skills, innovation growth and connectivity including transport but also digital connectivity.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Supported and authorised the participation in discussions that take forward the Capital City Region concept and the Great Western Cities initiatives;
2. Supported and participates in the development of the City Deal Initiative including the contribution of up to £47,000 towards the preparation of a City Deal bid for Cardiff and South East Wales;
3. Supported the preparation of a regional growth plan, based on an update to the South East Wales Strategic Framework.

727. BLUE BADGE PROPOSED CHANGES

The Head of Neighbourhood Services reported on an update on the outcome of the informal consultation stage of the proposal to introduce parking charges for all persons who utilise off street parking bays within the County Borough and requested approval to proceed with statutory consultation. He stated that a report was presented to Cabinet on 31 March 2015 which proposed changes to the concession to disabled parking which allowed free parking in all Council car parks throughout the County Borough, with it being subject to informal consultation and a report back to Cabinet of an appropriate way forward.

He reported on the outcome of the informal consultation, where 9 responses had been received, 7 of those responses supported the proposal that persons displaying their Blue badge in a Council car park pay the same amount as other users of the facility. However, a concession of an 'extra hour' of parking was being considered at off street car parks in addition to the time the motorist displaying the Blue Badge purchases. He stated that one respondent commented that the concession of an 'extra hour' of parking should be available to all users of off street car parks to promote the economy. The one response in opposition to the proposal expressed the view that it was inappropriate to expect disabled people to inconvenience themselves to approach and have to pay a fee at pay and display machines, especially during inclement weather.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services reported that the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People had missed the return deadline for the informal consultation; however, a response had since been received which opposed the proposal expressing the view that the implementation of charges would be cruel and unfair for disabled users particularly in light of benefit payments being reduced.

The Deputy Leader informed Cabinet of a response he had received from Cefn Cribwr Community Council requesting that the siting of pay and display machines is considered sensitively to assist users in wheelchairs purchasing tickets.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services undertook to provide Cabinet with details of the timescale for the consultation and he would look to meet with the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People to discuss the proposal.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet authorised officers to proceed to statutory consultation.

728. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAMME

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported on the work being undertaken as part of the Children with Disabilities Transformation Programme which

focuses on the review of in-county residential provision and respite services for children with disabilities.

She stated that the Safeguarding and Family Support Change Programme is a key element of the Bridgend Change Programme and the Children with Disabilities Transformation is a sub-programme which sits beneath that programme, within which four distinct work areas had been identified. A Children with Disabilities Programme Board has been created to oversee the programme; provide a strategic direction and monitor progress, with work to date focusing on reviewing respite services and reviewing the high cost of out of county placements.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that the aim of the Council is for children and young people to remain within their local community with family and friends, which is in keeping with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. She stated that at present, residential provision is available at Heronsbridge School, providing residential care for up to 6 service users. There is in addition, residential provision at Weston House in Bridgend College but this was not currently utilised or commissioned by the Council. She stated that when the needs, complexities and challenges of a young person escalate, and the family are struggling to cope and a 52-week accommodation service is required, the only option currently available is an Out Of County placement, which is not ideal for the child or their family as they have to move from their local area and these placements can also be expensive. There is clearly a demand for a 52-week accommodation service for children with disabilities locally, as there are currently three young people with disabilities who are placed Out Of County, and it has been identified they could be placed and educated in-county, should there be 52-week residential provision available in Bridgend. In addition there are currently three young people receiving 39-week residential care, whose needs and complexities are increasing to such a degree that 52-week residential provision may be needed in the near future. There are also three young people currently receiving substantial Direct Payments packages, whose complexities and home circumstances are changing, that may result in a 52-week residential provision being needed shortly.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing also reported that respite services were currently being provided through a combination of services including Bakers Way, Family Link and Direct Payments. A review of Bakers Way has been undertaken, which found that even though a valuable and quality service is being provided, there are some drawbacks, including; high transport costs due to distance to Heronsbridge School, high cancellation rates, and the building itself is in need of some renovation. She stated that as the existing model for respite services is one of high cost and traditional, it was an opportune to consider alternative models.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported in the short term assessments had commenced and discussions initiated with families of the three existing high cost Out of County placements, who could potentially be in County should there be 52 week residential provision available. She stated that discussions were also ongoing with Weston House and Heronsbridge School in respect of the viability of increasing their registration to 52-week residential provision, in order to facilitate the return of the three existing high-cost OOC placements, should these providers be able to meet service users' specific needs. She also informed Cabinet that service efficiencies have been implemented within Bakers Way, which includes; introducing a new process to manage and monitor cancellations, reviewing transport arrangements and identifying closer links with Adult Social Care, and reviewing the rates charged for placements from other local authorities using Bakers Way.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported on the long term actions which include an options appraisal for respite services for children with disabilities with

recommendations for a new model for respite services for disabled children. A new model for residential provision for children with disabilities using the facilities at Weston House, Heronsbridge School and other Council facilities was being developed, to include 52-week provision in-county.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities in commending the recommendations commented on the importance of bringing placements which were currently being provided Out of County back in County which would benefit families and assist children with their personal development. The Deputy Leader commented on the importance of consulting with families and service users prior to any decisions being made. He stated that discussions would also need to take place with Heronsbridge School on reviewing and possibly increasing their day school provision and capacity and that the work needs to be linked together

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Cabinet of the latest position with regard to Looked After Children in that the numbers had reduced in recent months and that the Council had monitoring systems in place to safely reduce their number in line with the budget.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Noted the report;
2. Noted that a further report will be presented to Cabinet proposing a new model for respite services and in-county accommodation for Children with Disabilities in the longer term;
3. Approved consultation with staff and stakeholders to inform the options for respite services and in-county accommodation in moving forward.

729. APPOINTMENT OF LA GOVERNORS

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation sought approval from Cabinet for the appointment of Local Authority governors to the school governing bodies listed.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved the appointment of Local Authority Governors listed.

730. NON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation sought approval of the Non School Attendance Enforcement Policy and amended School Attendance Strategy and Code of Conduct for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices in respect of authorised absence from school.

She stated that the Non School Attendance Enforcement Policy will ensure the legal process is consistent and sets out clear guidance on the statutory role of the Education Welfare Service including the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices and that the operation of fixed penalty notices which have been in place since January 2015.

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation reported that it was necessary for the new regulations to be included in the Strategy along with the Non School Enforcement Policy. She stated that the costs awarded to the Local Authority from a successful prosecution which did not relate to a fixed penalty notice will be allocated to

the EWS Hardship fund, with the monies used to supply school uniform and other necessary equipment for those children in need.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the Non School Attendance Enforcement Policy and the revised Attendance Strategy and Code of Conduct for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences at school.

731. APPOINTED OF ELECTED MEMBER CHAMPIONS

The Group Manager Legal and Democratic Services sought approval for the appointment of Elected Member Champions.

She stated that Elected Member Champions are appointed to provide a voice for traditionally under represented group, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business although they may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee. Elected Member Champions, are elected members who in addition to their other Council responsibilities make sure that the issue or group that they are championing are taken into account when council policy is being developed and decisions are made.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet appointed the following Cabinet Members to the Champion roles shown:

Portfolio	Champion
Leader	Armed Forces
Deputy Leader	Children & Young Peoples
Resources	Health & Safety
Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing	Mental Health Older Peoples Carers
Communities	Biodiversity Sustainability Anti-Poverty Domestic Abuse
Children's Social Services & Equalities	Diversity Equalities Young Carers

732. INFORMATION REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR NOTING

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services presented a report, the purpose of which was to inform Cabinet of the Information Reports which had been published since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet acknowledged the publication of the documents listed in the report:-

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
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CABINET - TUESDAY, 14 JULY 2015

Afon Y Felin Primary School 8 July 2015
Post Inspection Plan

Social Services Representations 8 July 2015
and Complaints Annual Report 2014/2015

Work Placements, Traineeships and 8 July 2015
Apprenticeships

Estyn Inspection Outcomes for 8 July 2015
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd

The Deputy Leader congratulated Afon Y Felin Primary School on the very positive outcome of the Estyn monitoring visit. Estyn has judged progress in each of the recommendations to be very good or strong.

The Deputy Leader also congratulated Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd on the outcome of its first ever Estyn inspection a notable achievement given that it is one of the Boroughs newest schools and had only this year reached its full complement of pupils.

733. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

734. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they contained exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the under-mentioned item in private with the public being excluded from the meeting as it would involve the disclosure of exempt information as stated above.

<u>Minute No:</u>	<u>Summary of Item:</u>
735	Exempt Minutes of Cabinet of 16 June 2015
736	South West Wales Regional Anaerobic Digestion Procurement

The meeting closed at 3.57 pm