

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 3.00 PM

Present

Councillor RE Young – Mayor and Chairperson

G Thomas	S Aspey	HJ David	M Gregory
MEJ Nott OBE	JH Tildesley MBE	E Dodd	M Butcher
G Davies	GW Davies MBE	PA Davies	DK Edwards
L Ellis	EP Foley	EM Hughes	CJ James
P James	RM James	RD Jenkins	B Jones
CL Jones	RC Jones	DRW Lewis	JE Lewis
JR McCarthy	HE Morgan	AD Owen	DG Owen
G Phillips	DR Pugh	CL Reeves	M Reeves
CE Smith	JC Spanswick	M Thomas	RL Thomas
HJ Townsend	KJ Watts	C Westwood	DBF White
HM Williams	R Williams	LC Morgan	CA Green
N Farr			

Officers:

Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Ness Young	Corporate Director - Resources & Section 151 Officer
Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director - Education & Transformation
Andrew Jolley	Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer
Satwant Pryce	Head of Regeneration and Planning
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

514. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

Councillor N Clarke – Holiday
Councillor P John – Unwell
Councillor M Jones – Holiday
Councillor D Sage – Unwell
Councillor P J White – Holiday
Councillor E Venables – Child care commitments
Mark Shephard – Corporate Director Communities – Other Council business.

515. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

516. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: 1. That the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council of 8 July 2015 be accepted as a true and accurate record subject

to the reason for apologies for absence for Councillor D White being changed to Work commitments in minute number 502.

2. That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council of 15 July 2015 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

517. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that he had attended the annual anniversary service to mark the Parc Slip disaster which was an incredibly moving event. The service was held at the memorial fountain erected at the site of the drift mine where the 1892 explosion claimed the lives of 112 boys and men. The Mayor joined members of the Parc Slip Memorial Committee and its supporters for a short service. Relatives of some of the men who died were present, and they read excerpts from a book about the disaster before those present paid their respects with a two-minute silence in memory of those who lost their lives. Also remembered were the 60 women who were widowed by the explosion and the 153 children who lost their fathers in the disaster. He urged Members to come along and take part in next year's anniversary service at the fountain, which is constructed from 112 stones, one for each of the miners who died.

The Mayor also announced that he recently made an extremely educational trip to the Milford Haven Coastguard Operations Centre, which opened earlier this year and which covers the coastline from Gloucester to Pwllheli. Following a shake-up in how coastguard services are provided, the centre became part of the new national network in February and received a major upgrade as part of the move. While there, he witnessed a call come in and saw a lifeboat launch in action which he was impressed with how fast and how smoothly the coastguards reacted to the call for help. The Centre has access to a wide range of equipment including helicopters and other rescue craft, the new network is intended to enable them to provide and receive mutual support from 10 other coastguard operations centres around the UK. The Mayor was highly assured by what he saw and learned, and he commended them for the difficult and dangerous job that they do.

The Mayor informed Members that the Charity Committee has arranged a Cheese and Wine evening at Season's Restaurant in Bridgend College on Wednesday 9 September, notices have been placed in Members pigeon holes and he looked forward to seeing as many Members as are able to attend.

The Mayor announced that on 15 September Councillor David White, as Mayor of Bridgend Town Council, is attending a service to honour RAF Sergeant Roy Penry Williams in The Netherlands. Sergeant Penry Williams, who was from Bridgend, was killed on a bombing mission in July 1941. He and five other airmen from the plane were initially believed to be buried locally with their precise resting place unknown. It was confirmed in 2011 that all six airmen were buried in a communal grave at Leeuwarden Cemetery in the north of the Netherlands. The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre is organising a service at the cemetery in memory of each crew member. Councillor White will be laying a wreath on behalf of Bridgend Town and on behalf of Bridgend County Borough and will be taking with him a personal letter from the Mayor to the Mayor of their town.

The Mayor announced that he attends many events as part of his role as Mayor and one of the pleasures of this lies in meeting new faces and making new friends. However, he got rather more than he bargained for following a visit to the Dogs Trust rehoming centre out at Penyfaï when he came away with a friend of the four-legged variety called Toby.

He informed Members that the centre is a first-class facility and the staff do an excellent job, and recommended that Members pay a visit. He stated that would be visiting the Cats Protection League in the near future.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader was pleased to report that GCSE and A Level results in Bridgend County Borough were particularly good this year. The overall A Level pass rate was 97.8 per cent, which is above the national average of 97.3 per cent, while the overall pass rate for AS Level rose to 90.1 per cent, again remaining higher than the Welsh average of 86.8 per cent. He stated that there were stand-out success stories at a number of local schools, including more than 80 per cent of pupils at Bryntirion who got into their first-choice universities. A pupil at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd was heading to study medicine at Cambridge after picking up six A Levels. A fifth of all A Level students at Archbishop McGrath gained A-star or A grades.

The Deputy Leader announced that at GCSE level, there was a 4.2 per cent increase in the number of students achieving at least five grades from A-star to C in English, Mathematics and Welsh First Language. With a 98.9 per cent rate for pupils gaining grades between A-star and G, there was a 1.6 per cent rise in pupils achieving A-star to C grades, while 18 per cent gained either A-star or A grades. Again, several local schools celebrated record-breaking results, including Bryntirion Comprehensive where 35 pupils gained at least five A-star or A grades. Cynffig and Brynteg comprehensives both enjoyed their best ever GCSE results, as did Maesteg Comprehensive where 99 per cent of students collecting at least five grades between A-star and G. The number of pupils achieving at least five A-star - C grades at Archbishop McGrath was up 17 per cent on last year, and Porthcawl Comprehensive also posted top marks, with particularly impressive results for science where 98.4 per cent of pupils achieved top marks without any qualifications. He congratulated all on the impressive results, and thanked the heads, teachers, governing bodies and everyone who has played a part in helping deliver this success.

He also informed Members that over the summer saw bumper numbers of children taking part in the School's Out programme of free play schemes and activities. Play 4 Life sessions at Ogmore Life Centre averaged 55 children per day and 40 at Garw Valley Life Centre. At Bridgend Life Centre, the sessions attracted around 60 children per day, and the Mini Play 4 Life scheme aimed at three to seven year olds had to double its capacity because of high demand. Community play schemes were well attended, and a special Communities First Play 4 Life programme teamed up with the library service to promote literacy as well as fun activities. He thanked town and community councils, Halo Leisure, Club Penybont, local schools, Bridgend Communities First and other partners for helping to make the 'School's Out' programme a huge success once again.

Cabinet Member Communities

The Cabinet Member Communities informed Members that a campaign has been running over the summer to find the County borough's number-one outdoor location, called 'My Green Space', as well as promoting some of the facilities that the area has to offer. The opportunity had been used to turn the spotlight on the local volunteers who put in hours of their own time each week to help maintain green spaces.

He also announces that from 'Friends' groups to small bands of community-spirited individuals, there are many volunteers within our communities who help to conserve the area's valuable natural habitats by getting involved in activities such as hedge laying, coppicing, dry stone walling, litter picking, general maintenance and more. For example,

the Bryngarw Park Volunteer Group supports the work of the park rangers and gives people a chance to learn new skills and make new friends while contributing towards life within the community. Constituents may be interested in finding out more about volunteering opportunities and to support this, a new website has been created in partnership with the Welsh Government which includes details of a wide range of groups, charities and organisations such as the Wildlife Trust or keep Wales Tidy. To find out more, please visit www.Natural Neighbourhoods.com.

The Cabinet Member Communities also mentioned a very useful new scheme that has been funded by the Welsh Government and which provides young people aged 16 to 18 with discounted bus travel. Called 'My Travel Pass', the scheme provides eligible teenagers with a discounted pass that can save up to a third off the price of an adult bus fare. This includes all local buses as well as longer distance TrawsCymru journeys throughout Wales. The scheme commenced this week and will run initially on a pilot basis until 31 March 2017. More details are available by calling 0300 200 22 33 or by visiting www.gov.Wales/mytravelpass.

Cabinet Member Children's Social Services & Equalities

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services & Equalities announced some good news from the National Child Measurement Programme for Wales who have confirmed that Bridgend County Borough has seen the highest percentage reduction in children aged four or five who are overweight or obese. Much of this success is down to initiatives such as the Family Active Zone which aims to provide physical activity and play opportunities while boosting a child's confidence, creativity, resilience and determination. They also work with families to look at issues such as healthy eating and regular exercise. With sixteen programmes running across the County Borough, a total of 120 families have received help so far. The Family Active Zone initiative has since been awarded a Health Social Care and Wellbeing Grant from Public Health Wales which will allow it to expand and encourage local communities to set up their own sustainable programmes, which she looked forward to be able to inform Council of further successes soon.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services & Equalities also advised Members that the Council's Flying Start team have won a prestigious NHS Wales Award in recognition of an innovative project that aims to help pre-school children improve their speech and language development. With national research showing that more than half of children raised in deprived communities are late talkers, the project has assessed the language skills of nearly 650 two-year-olds who use Flying Start nurseries across Bridgend County Borough. This identified that 57 per cent of the children required speech and language therapy sessions. To date, the programme has helped 68% of the identified children to improve their speech and language skills and has demonstrated the importance of early intervention. The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services & Equalities was delighted that Bridgend County Borough's Flying Start team has received national recognition for the strides they are making into improving the lives of pre-schoolers.

Cabinet Member Resources

The Cabinet Member Resources informed Members that the pre-Council presentation scheduled for 7 October will be on the topic of European Funding. The aim of this briefing is to provide Members with information about the next generation of EU funding programmes which Bridgend County Borough is eligible for. It will also advise on the preparations that are being made with regional partners to ensure that the County Borough benefits from these resources. He stated that this is a very important issue and hoped that all Members will be able to attend.

He also announced that the second session on child sexual exploitation awareness has been rescheduled for the morning of 15 September. As before, this session will

provide Members with information about child sexual exploitation and will cover a range of relevant issues such as risk indicators and the grooming process. It will also explain the process for dealing with concerns regarding a child or a young person who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, including the local context and how this links in with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.

He also reminded Members of the Appeals Panel that training has been arranged for 10am on Monday 7 September, which will be facilitated by officers from Legal Services and HR.

Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development hoped that Members have had a chance to give the all-new Digital Bridgend mobile phone app a try. The app, which is completely free to download, uses augmented technology to enable people to step into the past at key locations across the County Borough. The app is activated by holding a phone up against the skyline to reveal a super-imposed view of how the scene would have looked in days gone by. It also includes 17 innovative trails that take users off the beaten track to discover local heritage sites and stories, and can be used to unlock commentaries, video footage, audio content, treasure hunts, games and more. The app has been created by the Council in partnership with Visit Wales, the European Regional Development Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and more than 40 heritage organisations. The app can be downloaded by following the link at the Bridgend Bites website or by searching for 'Digital Bridgend' on iTunes or an Android app store.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development announced that the launch of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 on 1 October will introduce some big changes in consumer law. The Public Protection team have been out and about offering free advice to businesses on how the changes will affect their rights and obligations to customers by visiting stalls at Bridgend and Maesteg markets to speak with traders and make them aware of the imminent changes, they received some highly positive feedback. The Department has also worked with the Bridgend Business Forum to organise and promote a special event on 30 September which will focus on the new Act and what it will mean for businesses and consumers. The event is free to attend and he asked that if Members know of a trader who may be interested in finding out more, they can visit www.bridgendbusinessforum.co.uk or call 01656 815320.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development announced the launch of Bridges Into Work 2, the £7m second phase of a scheme to provide unemployed people aged 25 and over with intensive training and one-to-one monitoring designed to get them back into work. It is led by Torfaen Council and is aimed at more than 2,000 people living in the Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen Council areas. With new jobs, new qualifications and improved support for job seekers, the launch of this new programme is excellent news and he looked forward to seeing it make a positive impact alongside other employment projects, such as the proposed European-funded Communities for Work programme which aims to help residents living in Communities First areas.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development also informed Members that they may be aware that the Council has been working closely with Bridgend town centre traders to develop initiatives that will attract more shoppers into town during quieter periods, especially during the forthcoming demolition of the Rhiw and subsequent construction of a new car park, apartments and shops. As part of this a 'Free After 3PM' a trial parking project that will run throughout October and November. The Council is working on the development of a Business Improvement District for the town centre.

More details on these initiatives will be made available very soon and he hoped that Members, shoppers and traders alike will give them their full support.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive announced that Councillor Della Hughes has formally resigned from her position as a County Borough Councillor, which will leave a temporary vacancy in the Ogmere Vale ward. The Electoral team will be advertising the vacancy immediately and he will contact Members again with a further update on the situation as soon as possible. He anticipated at this stage that a by election will be held in mid-October.

The Chief Executive was pleased to inform Members that the Council has received some very encouraging performance statistics from the Welsh Government and Local Government Data Unit. The figures, which were collected during 2014-15, have revealed that the Council is one of the top five authorities in Wales for delivering improvements across all performance indicators. In addition, the Council is also one of the nine best performing councils in Wales. Of particular note is the fact that the Council has scored extremely highly across education, and delivered improvements across 82 per cent of indicators against a national rate of 73 per cent. He informed Members of the strong performance across children's social care services which had meant that nine of 11 performance indicators have either improved or maintained their ranking. These include how many formerly looked-after young people are living in suitable accommodation. The Council has moved from 18th place to take the number one spot here and for relevant children which have pathway plans in place, the Council has moved from 17th place to number one.

He stated the Council is one of only nine councils in Wales to achieve improvements in how long it takes to deliver a disabled facilities grant, and in doing so moved from ninth place to sixth place. Improvements had also been seen across all performance indicators for housing, planning and regulatory services, and against half of all indicators for social care and environment and transport. Elsewhere, there has been improvement across all of the Council's performance indicators for housing, planning and regulatory services, and against half of all the indicators for social care and environment and transport. The figures also reveal that Bridgend County Borough Council is within the top three authorities in Wales for reducing delays in the transfer of care, the top four for reducing how much waste is sent to landfill, the top five for supporting adults in the community, and among the top six for visits to sport and leisure centres and how many eligible local adults hold a concessionary bus pass. Ultimately, 54 per cent of the performance indicators have been placed within the higher quartiles, and when compared with the Council's overall performance statistics for the last three years, significant improvements have been made. The Chief Executive informed Members this had not happened by accident and reflects the hard work of many staff and partners. He stated that it was also worth noting that the corporate approach to performance management has been recognised by regulators as good practice and over the past 18 months or so and there had been a number of visits from other councils to observe how the Council goes about that. He was sure Members will welcome these statistics and join him in thanking the Council's dedicated staff and partners for their hard work in helping to improve the Council's performance and ensure that it can deliver the kind of high-quality services that its local communities deserve.

518. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader announced that he had joined other local politicians in urging Central Government to rethink plans for closing Bridgend Magistrates Court as part of a review by the Ministry of Justice. He had spent 25 years as a local magistrate, and had first-

hand knowledge how difficult it can be to get victims of crime, witnesses and defendants to attend court hearings. Forcing them to travel to Cardiff to do so in future would be even more difficult, and would not be in the best interests of justice for the communities that it serves. The close proximity of the building also enables Council staff to access it easily for their involvement with criminal and childcare litigation. The closure of the court would have a direct impact on staffing costs and the Council's ability to fund public protection litigation. As such, he had made a representation on behalf of the Council opposing the closure of the court, and he asked all Members to encourage constituents to make their feelings felt by taking part in the official consultation which runs until 8 October and can be found at www.gov.uk/moj

The Leader informed Members that the finalists for the 2015 Bridgend Business Forum Awards have been announced and he was pleased to inform Members that Bridgend Assembly Member and First Minister Carwyn Jones and TV presenter Sian Lloyd will be hosting this year's ceremony at the Coed-y-Mwstwr Hotel on 18 September. A record number of nominations had been received this year that have reflected the truly diverse range of businesses that are based within the County Borough. These awards recognise a huge array of talent and the vital role that businesses and entrepreneurs play in providing growth in the local economy, and he was sure that Members will join him in wishing the finalists the very best of luck.

The Leader also announced that with elections taking place next year for the National Assembly of Wales and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Members may also want to remind their constituents about the importance of ensuring that they are registered to vote. Over the past few weeks, households across the County Borough have been receiving forms asking them to confirm that information held for their address on the electoral register is correct. He stressed the importance of getting this right as statistics show that 94 per cent of UK residents who have lived at the same address for more than 16 years will be registered to vote compared to just 40 per cent of people who have lived at a property for less than a year. Work will be undertaken to identify households where residents are not on the register so and they will be contacted and encouraged to participate. As well as voting, being included on the register can help people avoid problems with credit, mobile phone contracts, mortgages, passport applications and more, there were therefore a number of reasons why it was important for people to take part.

519. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer sought approval of proposed amendments to the Constitution which reflect changes to the Council Procedure Rules.

He reported that a new Model Constitution has been developed supported by an ICT system to aid its amendment and that the new model was not significantly different in content with the exception of the call-in provisions. He stated that this Council had enabled a call-in to be referred to Council due to the original advice of the Welsh Government and that it was now in isolation in enabling this to take place.

The Monitoring Officer reported that the call-in provisions in place had been largely unchanged since the Leader and Cabinet arrangements were first introduced by the Local Government Act 2000. He outlined the three decisions which can be made by the Scrutiny process regarding an item which had been called-in. It was proposed that the power of Scrutiny to refer called-in items to Council be removed and the Council Procedure Rules amended accordingly. He stated that Council has no power to make decisions in respect of an Executive decision unless it was contrary to the Policy Framework or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the Budget Framework, the Constitution already deals with such events. The Monitoring Officer advised Council that

it was the role of Scrutiny to support and challenge Cabinet where appropriate, it was not the role of Council to do so and a referral to Council simply delays the decision making process.

The Monitoring Officer reported that the present drafting of the Constitution has also given rise to differences of interpretation particularly in relation to the speed at which a call-in should be dealt with. The proposed changes clarifies that call-in should be dealt with in priority to ensure that the concerns of Scrutiny and the decision making processes of the Authority are dealt with appropriately.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the Constitution be approved.

520. **PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER**

The Monitoring Officer reported on the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter which provided a breakdown of complaints against the Authority for 2014/15. He stated there had been a decrease in the number of complaints received by the Authority compared to 2013/14. There had been a decrease in the number of complaints relating to Children's Social Services, but an increase in the number of complaints relating to Adult Social Services. He stated that the Authority will continue to monitor complaints to ensure that improved responses to the Ombudsman are maintained.

RESOLVED: That the report and the Ombudsman's Annual Letter be noted.

521. **AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Monitoring Officer sought approval for a series of amendments made to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions relating to its functions within the scheme. He stated that a number of administrative amendments have been made and that the report consolidates those updates and advises of the outcomes of the subsequent review of the Scheme of Delegation which was undertaken.

The Monitoring Officer reported that changes had been made to the titles and responsibilities of Corporate Directors and to Cabinet Member Portfolios. A desktop review was undertaken to ensure that the Scheme was up to date and fit for purpose with revisions to paragraph 2.36 of Scheme B2 and paragraph 6.43 being identified. The explanation of the Chief Officer roles to which the Scheme of Delegation related to has been added for clarity. As a result of the implementation of the Joint Regulatory Service, the functions within the collaboration agreement that are reserved to the Authority shall remain within the scheme but the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services will provide appropriate delegations.

The Monitoring Officer also reported that paragraph 1.13 of the General Powers has been updated to reflect the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. To meet operational requirements a new paragraph 6.58 has been added to the Council functions of Scheme B2 of the Scheme of Delegation for the Corporate Director Communities.

The Monitoring Officer further reported that paragraph 2.58 of Scheme B2 be amended to read "Official Feed and Food Controls (Wales) Regulations 2009".

RESOLVED: That the Scheme of Delegation of Functions be approved.

522. **AMENDMENT TO THE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

The Monitoring Officer sought approval to amend the calendar of meetings in order to align them with the revised budget schedule.

He reported that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not be announcing the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review until 25 November 2015 and this would be the date when the Welsh Government receives its funding allocation. The Welsh Government would then need time to set its draft budget with the Authority likely to receive the provisional settlement at the end of December and not October when the draft budget is usually received. There is a legal requirement to set the Council Tax by 11 March 2016 and therefore Council must approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Tax by this date. Consequently, revisions are required to be made to the MTFs timetable which will affect the cycle of Council, Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings.

The Monitoring Officer also reported on a proposal to re-schedule the meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee from 15 September 2015 to 18 September 2015.

He informed Council that Cabinet at its meeting on 1 September 2015 had approved changes to its schedule of meetings and the inclusion of an additional meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting to take place on 12 October 2015.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following changes to the Council, Licensing Sub-Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates and agenda items be approved:

Meeting	Current Date	New Date
Council	16 March 2016	2 March 2016
CEL OSC	1 December 2016	18 January 2016
P&G PSC	3 February 2016	14 January 2016
ASC OSC	9 December 2016	13 January 2016
CRI OSC	21 January 2016	19 January 2016
CYP OSC	3 December 2016	21 January 2016
CRI OSC	11 January 2016	5 February 2016
Licensing Sub-Committee	15 September 2016	18 September 16

2. That the changes to the calendar of meetings relating to Cabinet meetings approved by Cabinet on 1 September 2015 be noted.

523. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

524. **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 item of business as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2015

Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above to consider the following item in private, with the public excluded from the meeting, as it was considered that in all the circumstances relating to the item, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

525. APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES

The meeting closed at 3.54 pm