

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 3.00 PM**

Present

Councillor RE Young – Chairperson

|              |                  |           |             |
|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| G Thomas     | D Sage           | HJ David  | M Gregory   |
| MEJ Nott OBE | JH Tildesley MBE | PJ White  | E Dodd      |
| M Winter     | E Venables       | M Butcher | N Clarke    |
| G Davies     | GW Davies MBE    | PA Davies | DK Edwards  |
| EP Foley     | EM Hughes        | RM James  | RD Jenkins  |
| PN John      | B Jones          | CL Jones  | M 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 Mephram   | Chief Executive  |
| Susan Cooper     | Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing                             |
| Deborah McMillan | Corporate Director - Education & Transformation                              |
| Mark Shepherd    | Corporate Director – Communities   |
| Ness Young       | Corporate Director – Resources & Section 151 Officer                         |
| Andrew Jolley    | Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Randal Hemingway | Head of Finance & ICT  |
| Gary Jones       | Head of Democratic Services  |
| Sarah Daniel     | Democratic Services Officer - Committees                                     |

547. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

Councillor S Aspey – Work Commitments  
Councillor C James – Unwell  
Councillor P James – Caring responsibilities  
Councillor L Ellis – Childcare

548. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

549. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting of Council dated 28 October 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to the inclusion of Councillor J H Tildesley's vote with regard to minute no.545

550. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor announced that one of his aims for his Mayoral year was to visit different faith groups to demonstrate our support for the multi-cultural society in which we now live. He explained he had the pleasure of visiting the Cardiff Synagogue recently as a guest and observer. He was made extremely welcome and found the whole experience both moving and fascinating. He was privileged to witness the recitation of the Jewish Prayer for the Dead - the Kaddish - which was recited in honour of Remembrance Sunday. This was a memorable experience and one of the highlights of his year so far. The Mayor added that he had invited Rabbi Michael Rose and members of his congregation to visit Bridgend and he looked forward to hosting them soon. He was also shortly due to visit the Salvation Army, and was currently liaising with the Muslim Association to arrange a visit to the mosque in Aberkenfig

As Christmas was advancing fast the Mayor had pleasure in announcing that as part of the charity fundraising, he and the Mayoress would be hosting a "Nearly Christmas Dinner" on the evening of the 20 December at the Heronston Hotel. Tickets were £21 per person and Kate Thomas had kindly agreed to speak about her experiences during her time as Lord Lieutenant. He added he aimed to make the dinner a lovely and enjoyable evening and would be honored if Members would join him. Tickets were available via his charity committee – and added that he appreciated Members support, whether it was attending events, donating prizes or purchasing raffle tickets.

The Mayor confirmed to Members that as agreed at the last Council meeting, he had written as Chair of Council to Prime Minister David Cameron expressing the Council's opinion that the UK Government should abandon the Trade Union Bill and make a commitment to work in partnership with the Trade Union movement to achieve a fairer society. He added that he had received a response to say that the correspondence was under consideration.

Finally, the Mayor informed Members that the Council had recently lost two former councillors and past mayors. Bill Burt sadly passed away not long after he and the Mayoress had recently visited him at Bryn-y-Cae where he was delighted to receive his Ogwr mayoral portrait. The Mayor added that he was a gentleman to the core, and would be greatly missed. His funeral would be held on Monday 30 November at 2.15pm at Coychurch Crematorium and the Mayor was honoured that the family had asked him to say a few words about Bill. He further added that all were welcome at the funeral and later at the Mason's Arms in Bryncethin. The Mayor also passed on the sad news that Granville Walters had died last weekend. Glan, as he was known, was the second Mayor of BCBC and a long serving Councillor and community Councillor, his funeral would be held on 2 December at Coychurch Crematorium. The Leader informed members that he had written to the families of Bill Burt and Glan Walters on behalf of Council expressing their sadness and sympathy. Members and Officers of Council stood for a one minute silence in remembrance of their former colleagues.

Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services stated that the political balance of Council would be reviewed at the next meeting following the election of new Councillor Dhanisha Patel.

He also informed members that the Budget Cabinet meeting of 23 February 2016 would be moved to 1 March 2016 and the Budget Council meeting of 2 March 2016 would be moved to 10 March 2016

#### MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

##### Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader began by sharing some good news with members that Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School in Brackla no longer requires monitoring. Inspectors had deemed that the school had made good progress since 2013 in addressing a series of key recommendations for improving performance at key stages three and four, boosting pupil attendance, and enhancing both the quality of teaching and the consistency of provision for developing pupil skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.

The Deputy Leader added that elsewhere, Abercerdin Primary had won a platinum Eco-Schools award for their efforts which included a school farm, and the governing body at Maesteg Comprehensive had been awarded a bronze mark of quality from the Welsh Government and ADEW.

The Deputy Leader thanked the head teacher, governors, teachers and staff at the school for their efforts and congratulated them on delivering the improvements.

The Deputy Leader announced that six local schools had been selected to help pioneer the development of an innovative new curriculum that would be taught across Wales from 2021. Oldcastle Primary School, Heronsbridge School, Ysgol Cynwyd Sant, Mynydd Cynffig Primary, Pencoed Comprehensive School and Maesteg Comprehensive School would be among those leading on the design of the new curriculum, while Maesteg would also be looking at teachers' training requirements and workloads so that they were given all the necessary support. The schools would be working as part of an all-Wales partnership with local authorities, regional consortia, Estyn, leading academics, employers, Welsh Government and other key stakeholders. A significant feature of the new curriculum was the removal of the current 'key stages' to try and create a more seamless progression through school for all pupils.

The new curriculum would also incorporate a number of exciting new developments that were particularly suitable for the modern world – for example, 'digital competence' would join literacy and numeracy as key elements that teachers would be expected to weave into all lessons across the curriculum, and there would also be a greater emphasis on health and wellbeing. The Deputy Leader added that he was looking forward to seeing the new curriculum develop and was sure that all six schools would play a full role in the delivery.

##### Cabinet Member Communities

The Cabinet Member – Communities announced that the communities of Porthcawl and Bryncethin had some excellent news recently after the Big Lottery Fund awarded them £50,000 each to develop proposals that if successful were likely to deliver a range of benefits for many generations to come. He stated that the Porthcawl Harbourside CIC project aimed to establish an all-weather community asset and visitor attraction by constructing a five-storey Maritime Centre within the town's harbour quarter using a leasehold transfer of land from Bridgend County Borough Council. With a strong focus on coastal science and maritime-related history, sport, fitness, leisure, community learning and employment opportunities, the project had been invited to develop a stage two application to the CAT2 programme.

The Cabinet Member – Communities informed Council that Bryncethin Community group had been invited to submit a stage two application for their plans to leasehold transfer the local sports pavilion and a large area of land from the Council as well as the former clay pits site. Their proposal involved the creation of three new full-size football / rugby pitches, a cricket pitch, new allotments, a community growing area, a lake suitable for fishing and kayaking, a mountain bike route, a health and wellbeing trail, a camping site and a community building featuring changing rooms, a large activity space, a commercial kitchen, meeting facilities and more. If the second stage bids were successful, both projects stood to receive grant funding of up to £1,150,000.

The Cabinet Member- Communities stated he was pleased to see that Bridgend County Borough had generated not one but two of the seven projects selected by the Big Lottery Fund across Wales, and this aptly demonstrated how the Council and local organisations were working closely together to find new, alternative ways of delivering services for our communities.

#### Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care & Health & Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care & Health & Wellbeing stated that Members may want to let constituents know about the Shared Lives scheme, which the Authority had been promoting recently. This was run by care organisation Ategi in partnership with the Council and let people who have been assessed by Social Services as needing help with accommodation to live with Shared Lives carers instead of within a care home. It was of particular help for vulnerable and disabled adults including people with mental health issues, acquired brain injuries, physical disabilities and older people. Shared Lives carers receive full training, on-going support and good rates of pay, and they do an outstanding job which delivered a significant contribution to the community. The Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care & Health & Wellbeing advised that further information about the Shared Lives scheme was available by visiting [www.ategi.org.uk](http://www.ategi.org.uk)

The Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care & Health & Wellbeing asked if Members knew of any young wheelchair users in their community, they might like to let them know about local opportunities for wheelchair rugby sessions. These had been organized by the Active Young People department in partnership with the organization, Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby, and a taster session was recently held at Bryncethin Sports Centre which gave people the chance to try their hand at the recognized Paralympic sport. The Authority's Disability Sports Officer works closely with local schools and communities to identify ways in which we can help disabled people in the county borough enjoy keeping active, so anyone who would like to find out more can do so by calling 01656 815220 or emailing [aypd@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:aypd@bridgend.gov.uk)

The Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care & Health & Wellbeing added that members may have seen that the Welsh Government had recently announced that all landlords and agents of private residential property in Wales were now required to be registered or licenced following a change in the law. He advised that it was essentially intended to prevent rogue landlords and agents from letting and managing properties in Wales, he added that the new Rent Smart scheme would raise awareness among landlords, agents and tenants about their respective rights and responsibilities. Landlords and agents have one year to comply with the new scheme before any action is taken. More information was available from the website [www.rentsmart.gov.wales](http://www.rentsmart.gov.wales) or by calling 03000 133344.

#### Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities advised members about an innovative new campaign set up by The Girls Network called 'Pass It On' which

seemed very apt the season of goodwill was fast approaching. The campaign focused on encouraging people to be more active and healthy by urging participants to pick three good deeds that could be passed on to others to help improve health and wellbeing in communities across Bridgend County Borough. Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities stated that it was initially set up to improve participation in physical activity among young girls and women, but had been expanded as the Girls Network also wanted to encourage members of the community to get on board and 'pass it on'.

The scheme was very simple and could involve something small like befriending someone who has low self-esteem, or inviting a friend to go to an exercise class. In return, they would do the same for three other people, and so on. The Girls Network was set up by Bridgend County Borough's Active Young People Department and is largely made up of girls from comprehensive schools across the county borough, as well as other representatives such as the group's ambassador, Bridgend-based Olympian Helen Jenkins. The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities added that this was a real 'feel-good' campaign, and although it had been set up to increase the number of girls taking part in physical activity, the authority invited anyone to get involved, as it encouraged all to think about the wellbeing of others to improve lives in our communities. More information was available by calling 01656 815223 or emailing [aypd@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:aypd@bridgend.gov.uk) 'Pass It On' was also active across social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Members were advised that for further information they could speak to Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities for further details.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities stated that this year's White Ribbon campaign was encouraging people to speak out about domestic abuse through a special social media campaign. The campaign featured a large speech bubble which people could use to give their thoughts on the issue of domestic abuse and issue it to Calan DVS across Facebook and Twitter. Calan DVS would then collate and promote the various messages and images that they receive. The White Ribbon campaign would tie in closely with the No-Vember campaign, which was also being organised by Calan DVS, and urged members to give both their full support.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities stated that members may want to lend their support to this year's Bridge FM Toy Appeal which had been organised by the station in association with the Co-Operative and HMP & YOI Parc. In order to participate members would need to buy a new toy and drop it off at a Co-Op store in Brackla, Cowbridge, Llantwit, Margam, Pencoed, Pontycymmer, Porthcawl or at Pyle Petrol Station. The station would arrange for the toy to be collected, wrapped and distributed to children who may otherwise not receive anything on Christmas morning. Members could find out more information at the Bridge FM website.

#### Cabinet Member Resources

The Cabinet Member Resources advised members that the pre-Council presentation in December would be on the theme of the Local Transport Plan, and had already been scheduled into member's calendars. He added that its aim was to make members more familiar with the purpose and rationale of the plan. It would explain the process of preparation, and give an overview of the Authority's responsibilities and funding which Members should find very useful and informative.

The Cabinet Member Resources advised that Swansea Council would be hosting a half day regional information session on Gypsies and Travellers on the morning of Wednesday 9 December. The course aimed to ensure that elected members fully understood their responsibilities to gypsy traveller communities under the new Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010. The Cabinet Member Resources advised that

if there was sufficient interest, transport would be provided from the Civic Offices. He asked Members to therefore confirm their attendance with Democratic Services as soon as possible so they could make the necessary arrangements.

The Cabinet Member Resources advised that members will have received an email from Gary Jones regarding Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans. He asked if members could indicate to Gary via email whether they required an assessment so that it could be arranged as a matter of priority.

#### Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development announced that together with the Bridgend Tourism Association, Bridgend County Borough Council was looking to recruit 30 volunteers who love their local coastline and countryside so much that they could act as tourism ambassadors for the area. He added that whenever people plan weekend breaks or holidays these days, they scour online reviews to pick up hints and tips of the best places to stay and things to do. The ambassador programme takes that a step further, giving potential visitors a chance to call up a friendly group of people who know the area better than anyone.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development added that the Authority were looking for people who worked either inside or outside of the tourism industry – their most important attributes would be their enthusiasm, passion for the area and ability to shout about it to others. He hoped that members would spread word about this new initiative throughout local communities and that anyone who wanted further information could contact Tracy James Lieberman on [tracyjlevents@gmail.com](mailto:tracyjlevents@gmail.com) or by calling 077 73 804 470.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development advised that the official launch of the Porthcawl Townscape Heritage Initiative took place last week at the Jennings Building, and doubted that we could have found a more appropriate historic venue than the Grade II listed former harbourside warehouse. The THI scheme was making a total of £1.3 million available between 2014 and 2019 to renovate and refurbish buildings within the historic heart of Porthcawl, and was already transforming the likes of the Customs House and Pilot Tower.

With the launch, Bridgend County Borough was officially one of just two areas in the whole of the UK to have successfully established five different THI schemes, so there was much to feel proud of.

#### Chief Executive

The Chief Executive stated that Chancellor George Osborne had outlined details of the UK Governments first comprehensive spending review since 2010 and autumn statement earlier in the afternoon. He added that the subsequent debate and analysis was still unfolding and would require close scrutiny, but significant developments included the scrapping of plans to phase out working tax credits, no cuts to the police budget and extra funding for the NHS and mental health services.

The Chief Executive also advised that the Chancellor had also announced plans for local authorities to levy a social care precept of up to two per cent in Council tax and has stated that he intends to deliver welfare savings of £12 billion in full and move the UK towards a national living wage.

The Chief Executive advised that in terms of education in England, plans were still going ahead for a new national funding formula for schools as part of what the chancellor had described as being a total financial support package of £10billion. He added that some analysts had estimated that local government funding in England would be cut by £7

billion over the next few years. How Wales' budget would change remained unclear, but there were plans to establish a Welsh "funding floor" which would reportedly guarantee funding of £115 for every £100 spent in England. The block grant to Wales would apparently be almost £15 billion by 2019/20, and income tax powers be partially devolved.

The Chief Executive added that Capital spending looked set to rise by more than £900million over five years. Business rates would be reformed to enable Councils to keep any revenue generated, and the uniform business rates would be scrapped. The Chancellor had also advised that Councils would be able to keep 100 per cent of any receipts they receive from the sale of assets while a rate relief scheme for small businesses would be extended for another year.

The Chief Executive informed Council that of particular interest from the spending review was that UK Government funding has been committed toward the City Deal for the Cardiff Capital Region, although no figure was announced. The Chief Executive added that a large part of the announcement focussed on how the Chancellor planned to double the housing budget to £2billion a year in order to generate 400,000 affordable new homes to rent and buy by 2020 and how the right to buy would be extended to tenants of housing associations.

The Chief Executive added that in more general terms, departmental spending had been cut by 37% on transport, 17% on business, 20% on Culture and 15% on the Environment. He further added that the above was just a quick flavour of what was announced before the meeting of Council commenced and was awaiting to see what further information would be revealed and that the potential implications for Wales would be.

The Chief Executive stated that Members would have seen an announcement from Public Services Minister Leighton Andrews regarding the latest status of proposals for possible local government reorganisation in Wales where he spoke of the publication of the Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill, the likely cost of mergers and what level of long-term savings could be achieved. He stated that at this stage the proposed merger of Bridgend County Borough Council with Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff is still high on the table, although it was of course important to note that the proposal remained in a draft form and may be subject to further change. He added that BCBC were examining the assumed costs and savings in greater detail, but as the draft bill run to 600 pages and looked at more than just plans for reorganisation BCBC were also studying it to establish its full scope and potential implications for the future of local government. The Chief Executive further added that as the Authority were still a long way off the creation of any new authorities he had reminded staff of the importance of remaining focussed on taking Bridgend County Borough Council forward in the face of the need to deliver budget reductions of at least £50 over the next few years.

551. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader announced that following the recent dreadful terrorist attacks in Paris, he advised members he had drafted a letter as Leader to the First Minister expressing the sympathies and concerns of the people of the county borough, and requested that he pass these on in any dealings he may have on the matter. He added that the Mayor had also written directly to the French Consulate, and the authority had observed the national one minute silence with the flags placed at half-mast.

The Leader stated that members may have seen that Welsh Government had confirmed it was due to contribute £580 million towards a City Deal proposal that could be worth up to £1.28 billion. This marked a major commitment and the Leader had recently joined

with the leaders of nine other local authorities to submit an outline of their proposals to the UK Government ahead of the comprehensive spending review. He added that the City Deal would require close working with UK Government, Welsh Government and the private sector, and if successful would deliver many benefits linked to the economy and transport connectivity. It would also improve local productivity, create new jobs and improve the quality of life for people living throughout the South East Wales area. The Leader stated that he was proud that Bridgend County Borough Council was playing a key role in the project, and was looking forward to keeping Members updated on as it progressed further.

Finally, the Leader informed members that not long after the authority first came into being BCBC marked the completion in the Garw Valley of what was then the largest land reclamation project in Europe. He added that he was always impressed at the scale of that project and how it was continuing to benefit local people almost twenty years later, so he was overjoyed to see work begin in the neighboring Llynfi Valley on an ambitious 10 year plan to transform the former Coegnant Colliery and Maesteg Washery site into an all-new community woodland. He advised that as well as creating a range of wildlife habitats and bringing part of the valley back into public use, the project was intended to help reduce the risk of flooding in the area. It would involve the planting of 60,000 broadleaf, ornamental and fruit trees, and the Authority were working closely with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, the Ford Motor Company and Maesteg Town Council on the project. The Leader added that this was going to create a cleaner, greener space that would encourage people to be more active, and was sure to have a long and lasting impact on the lives of local residents as well as visitors.

**552. HALF YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2015-16**

The Head of Finance and ICT provided Members with the Half –Year Treasury Management report. He advised members that the Council was required to operate the overall treasury function with regard to the Code and that it was formally adopted by the Council in February 2012. This included a requirement for the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) before the start of each financial year which set out the Councils and Chief Financial Officer's responsibilities, delegation and reporting arrangements. He added that Council approved the TMS 2015-16 on 25 February 2015.

The Head of Finance and ICT referred to the table detailed in paragraph 4 of the report and stated that the £19.25 million was due to mature in 2054 and related to the Lender's Option Borrowers Option (LOBO) loans which may be rescheduled in advance of the maturity date. The LOBO rate and term may vary in the future depending upon the prevailing market rates, the lender exercising their option to increase rates at one of the bi-annual trigger points and therefore, the Council being given the option to accept the increase or to repay the loan without incurring a penalty. The current average interest rate for these LOBO's was 4.65% compared to the PWLB Loans average interest rate of 4.70%

The Head of Finance and ICT stated that the long term liabilities figure of £23.62 million at 30 September 2015 included £19.04 million for the Council's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement (for the provision of a Secondary School in Maesteg) and a new Long Term Liability of £2.40 million relating to a loan from the WG Central Capital Retained Fund for regeneration works within the Llynfi Valley.

The Head of Finance and ICT informed Council that the Bank Rate started the financial year at 0.50% and it had remained at that level from 1 April to 30 September 2015. He added that it was expected to remain at that level for the 2015-16 financial year.



The Head of Finance and ICT stated that Cipfa's Code of Practice for Treasury Management required all Local Authorities to conduct a mid-year review of its treasury management policies, practices and activities. As a result of the review it was not deemed necessary to make any changes to the main parts of the Treasury Management Strategy 2015-16, however, it the review stated it would be beneficial for the Council to make some minor revisions to the Investment Strategy included within the Statement to enable increased flexibility and increase the investment opportunities available to the Council whilst still maintaining security. Following consultation with Alingclose the proposed main changes were:

- Reduce the UK Local Authorities individual counterparty limit from £15 million to £12 million
- Increase the unsecured investments with Building Societies group limit from £5 million to £6 million
- Add additional wording to clarify to the counterparty limits

A Member referred to para 4.4.3 of the report and asked where the favourable cash flows came from and how they compared to previous years. The member also stated that it may be useful in future years to have a pre-Council briefing on the report so members fully understand its content. The Head of Finance and ICT advised that at the same period for the last financial year there was a similar increase in cash flow and this was income received from residents that choose to pay their Council tax up front in the first half of the year. He also advised that training sessions for the Audit Committee on the Treasury Management could be opened up to members if they felt it would be of benefit to them.

RESOLVED: That Council –

1. Approved the changes to the Investment Strategy within the Treasury Management Strategy 2015-16 as highlighted in the report
2. Noted the treasury management activities for the first half of 2015-16
3. Noted the projected Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2015-16

553. 2016-17 COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Head of Finance and ICT reported that under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), Council was required to set the tax base upon which council tax was levied by the authority and other precepting bodies. The information was required by Welsh Government to allocate the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to local authorities and by the Council to calculate the Council tax required to fund the 2016-17 budget.

The Head of Finance and ICT advised that the estimated Council tax base for 2016-17 was £53,247.37 and the estimated collection rate was 97.5% which was 0.5% increase on the previous year. He added that the Council tax element of the Council's budget requirement would be based on the net council tax base for each community area and details of these were attached at appendix A of the report.

A member referred to the table in appendix A of the report and noted that the 97.5% collection percentage was an estimated figure; they stated that members would be better informed if they could see actual figures and not an estimate. The Head of Finance and ICT stated that the figures were an estimate due to the timescales being in the future, he advised that he was able to share actual figures for previous years as a comparison if members preferred.

Members questioned the 0.5% increase in the estimated collection percentage of the Council Tax base and asked if the Town and Community Councils would have more financial resources available to them than previous years. The Head of Finance and ICT explained that the estimated collection percentage was used to calculate the Council's RSG and that the Town and Community Councils would collect 0.5% more Council tax than they did in the previous year.

RESOLVED:                   1. Council approved the Council tax base and collection rate for 2016-17 as shown in paragraph 4.1 of the report  
                                      2. Council approved the tax bases for the Community areas set out in Appendix A of the report.

554. WEBCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services submitted a report to Council regarding the progress that had been made in respect of the implantation of webcasting for meetings of Council and its Committees. He explained that the following benefits had been identified that could be achieved from the broadcasting of public meetings:

- Transparent governance and accountability
- Citizen engagement and understanding of the democratic process for example understanding of planning decisions
- Enables the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requirement for engaging public in Scrutiny
- Incentive for high standards of member attendance, engagement and conduct at meetings
- Effective means of communicating to officers and other members information and decisions. Archived meetings could also be a useful part of officer induction and training.
- Opportunities for members to learn from peer observation and inform potential candidates about their role to encourage democratic renewal.

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services reminded members that Council approved the recording and broadcasting of meetings and approved initial proposals to take forward the webcasting of meetings on 30 April 2014. Council agreed that to reduce the cost of implementation and operation, the Council Chamber would be used for all webcasts. As a result, work was carried out to improve the displays and update some of the presentation systems within the Council chamber and a pilot webcast had taken place as proof of concept.

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services advised that an initial plan based on a formal Committee meeting lasting 3 hours was being proposed which would enable many of the public formal Committees to be webcast before 30 March 2016. As the Development Control Committee was a regulatory Committee and currently had a higher level of public interest than other committees it was proposed that two meetings of that Committee be webcast during that period. The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services informed Members that additional webcasting refresher training would be provided to members and officers. Training sessions had been provisionally arranged for 4 January 2016 and a further session would be held on 25 January 2016.

RESOLVED:                   That Council considered the content of the report and approved the implementation of webcasting to Bridgend County Borough Council

555. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services presented Council with a review of work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny function during the period September 2014 – September 2015. He advised that since 2008 there had been a number of incremental changes to the corporate structure. Some changes to the remits of the Committees had been undertaken but these changes had only been to realign the scrutiny Committees to the directorate responsibilities. He added that with the significant challenges faced by the Authority to meet the requirements of the MTFs, savings have had to be made across all departments and Directorates, with scrutiny being no exception.

The Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services informed members that following a work programming exercise in 2014 it was identified that there was a significant volume of replication between the scrutiny committees. Members expressed their concerns that this was a duplication of effort and distracted the committees from undertaking effective scrutiny of the service areas. He advised that to address this and other concerns a review of the activities of Scrutiny was undertaken. Proposals were developed in consultation with the Scrutiny Chairpersons which were subsequently collated into a report for presentation to Council in April 2015. The Future Delivery of Effective Scrutiny report proposed a significant number of changes to address the concerns of Members, this included scrutiny of the following topics and to be co-ordinated by the Corporate Resources & Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a. Performance Monitoring
- b. Corporate Plan
- c. Business Planning
- d. Budget Monitoring

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services stated to Members that covering reports from the scrutiny officers to the Scrutiny Committees had now ceased. He explained that scrutiny officers had begun to work with the service officers to prepare their reports in accordance with the Committee requirements. He added that the process would continue to be developed and it was hoped that reports presented to the Scrutiny Committees would fully meet their requirements. The involvement of scrutiny officers to support the authors of the reports would also reduce the likelihood of additional requests for information being made by the committee, thereby substantially reducing the considerable amount of time spent by Scrutiny and other officers within the directorates in following up requests for further information.

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services explained that Scrutiny activities could be wide ranging and diverse and were not necessarily experienced by stakeholders within the process in a consistent and easily describable way. For example, Research and Evaluation Panels provided a less formal form of interaction between Committee Members and invitees than a traditional Committee meeting setting allows for. However, 'Call-Ins' were a very different experience for invitees and the impact of Scrutiny in these two instances would be specific to each case. He added that striking an effective balance between the 'challenge' and 'support' elements of the Scrutiny function was reliant on Committees building strong working relationships and demonstrating other key skills such as negotiation and influencing, team-working, policy analysis and questioning techniques.

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services advised members of the further work that would be carried out by Overview and Scrutiny which was as followed:

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- To develop and improve current processes to enable Scrutiny Officers to better track and monitor recommendations once they have been made to Cabinet or Officers.
- Work with senior officers and Cabinet to develop a process to ensure that responses by Cabinet to recommendations from Scrutiny are received in a consistent and timely manner.
- Develop the ability of Scrutiny to communicate effectively with the public and to better facilitate engagement and participation in democratic accountability.

Members thanked the officers for the report and noted that a small amount of staff were relied upon for effective Scrutiny and therefore encouraged collaboration with neighboring authorities. Members also welcomed the future development work for Scrutiny and encouraged engagement with the public.

RESOLVED: Council noted the content of the report

556. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 4.21 pm