

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 26th July, 2021.

The Council agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor Jayne Norman (Mayor); Councillors Julie Aviet, Rhiannon Birch, Jonathan Bird, Bronwen Brooks, Lis Burnett, George Carroll, Christine Cave, Janice Charles, Millie Collins, Geoff Cox, Robert Crowley, Andrew R.T. Davies, Pamela Drake, Vincent Driscoll, Stewart Edwards, Ben Gray, Owen Griffiths, Stephen Griffiths, Anthony Hampton, Sally Hanks, Nic Hodges, Hunter Jarvie, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Gordon Kemp, Peter King, Kevin Mahoney, Kathryn McCaffer, Anne Moore, Neil Moore, Michael Morgan, Rachel Nugent-Finn, Andrew Parker, Bob Penrose, Sandra Perkes, Andrew Robertson, Leighton Rowlands, Ruba Sivagnanam, John Thomas, Neil Thomas, Steffan Wiliam, Margaret Wilkinson, Edward Williams, Mark Wilson and Marguerita Wright.

280 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Mayor read the following statement:

“May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

281 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor Vincent Bailey.

282 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

There were no declarations received.

283 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

284 ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- (i) The Mayor made the following announcement – Since the last Full Council meeting the Mayor advised that she had been pleased to undertake a number of Civic duties which had included; a wreath laying ceremony at the Merchant

Seamans Memorial at the Civic Offices, in commemoration of the D Day landings, a flag raising ceremony to celebrate Gay Pride month, attended a virtual award ceremony for the Royal Welsh Regiment and attended a virtual performance of a specially written piece of work by the 'Forget-me-not Chorus', a choir made up from groups of people living with dementia. The Mayor had also hosted a flag-raising ceremony at the Civic Offices to commemorate Armed Forces Week, attended the Inauguration of the Consulate for Poland, at Cardiff Castle, visited Bro Radio's newest facility at Llantwit Major, attended the Mayor of Llantwit Major's Charity Garden Party, attended the Barry Sea Sunday event held at the Seafarers Memorial on the Barry Waterfront, attended a very interesting and informative walk around Barry Cemetery, hosted by the Mayor of Barry, where four plaques had been unveiled in memory of celebrated local people. Following a number of applications being received under the Mayoral Grant Fund several awards had been agreed for a number of organisations and groups within the community.

(ii) PETITION –

Councillor John presented a petition to the Mayor via email on behalf of Llantwit First Independents to build a Health Centre on Eagleswell Road Site asking the Vale Council to abandon its policy of building 72 houses on the site and to designate the land for community purposes.

285 NOTICE OF MOTION (SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS K.P. MAHONEY AND R.A. PENROSE) –

- (i) Transparency – That all substantive votes carried out in full Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings be automatically recorded by name and the result including names, displayed clearly in the subsequent minutes of that meeting.

Councillor Mahoney, in presenting the Motion, advised that in his view for the benefit of local residents Councillors' names and how they voted should be recorded in the minutes of Council meetings.

Councillor Penrose, in seconding the Motion, requested that the Council also consider an electronic voting system going forward.

Councillor Carroll, in thanking both Councillors Mahoney and Penrose for bringing the Motion for consideration, stated in his view it was a sensible suggestion and that comments made at Committee meetings should also be attributed to Members.

The Leader advised that all meetings had been live streamed for public viewing for transparency due to current Covid restrictions for some time and was intended to do so for the majority of Council meetings in the future which reflected impending legislative changes. Such meetings were recorded for archive purposes and these records could be viewed by the public. If any Member disagreed with a decision taken by any Committee that Member was a member of, they had an existing right to

have their dissent to that decision to be recorded in the minutes of that meeting. This was in addition to requesting for a Recorded Vote. All of this information was within the Council's Constitution. The Leader also referred to items / reports at Committee being agreed by general affirmation of the Committee, without the need for a formal vote and the Motion as submitted would diminish a Committee's capability to do this in the future.

Councillor John echoed the Leader's comments, advising that recording votes at every meeting on every item in the minutes would be onerous unless an e-voting system was available.

Councillor Rowlands considered that although the Council was adhering to legislation, he felt that the Motion would be an addition to what the Council was doing.

Councillor Kemp referred to the issue that some people may not be able to view live broadcasts of meetings or recordings for various reasons and therefore he felt the written minutes would be appropriate to include the details and he could see no issue with the Motion.

Councillor Dr. Johnson also had no objection to the Motion and stated he was happy to support it and also enquired as to why a voting system was not available.

Councillor King felt that the opportunity to watch a meeting live and / archived was extremely beneficial in his view and until an e-voting system was introduced, he considered the recordings to be more than adequate.

Councillor Mahoney, in response, stated that although the meetings were recorded broadcast live, it was important that everyone's vote was heard and / or recorded in the minutes.

A Recorded Vote took place on the above Motion as follows:

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet		√	
Rhiannon Birch		√	
Jonathan Bird		√	
Bronwen Brooks		√	
Lis Burnett		√	
George Carroll	√		
Christine Cave	√		

Janice Charles	√		
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox		√	
Robert Crowley	√		
A.R.T Davies	√		
Pamela Drake		√	
Vince Driscoll	√		
Stewart Edwards	√		
Ben Gray		√	
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths	√		
Anthony Hampton	√		
Sally Hanks		√	
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie		√	
Gwyn John		√	
Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp	√		
Peter King		√	
Kevin Mahoney	√		
Kathryn McCaffer		√	
Anne Moore		√	
Neil Moore		√	
Michael Morgan		√	
Jayne Norman		√	
Rachel Nugent-Finn	√		

Andrew Parker		√	
Bob Penrose	√		
Sandra Perkes		√	
Andrew Robertson	√		
Leighton Rowlands	√		
Ruba Sivagnanam		√	
John Thomas		√	
Neil Thomas		√	
Steffan Wiliam	√		
Margaret Wilkinson		√	
Edward Williams		√	
Mark Wilson		√	
Marguerita Wright	√		
TOTAL	21	25	

The Motion was Lost.

286 NOTICE OF MOTION (SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS K.P. MAHONEY AND R.A. PENROSE) –

(ii) Transparency 2 – That all substantive votes carried out in Vale of Glamorgan Council Cabinet meetings be automatically recorded by name and the result including names, displayed clearly in the subsequent minutes of that meeting.

Councillor Mahoney, in presenting his Motion (seconded by Councillor Penrose) requested that a Recorded Vote be taken on the Motion.

There being no further discussion,

A Recorded Vote took place on the above Motion as follows:

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet		√	

Rhiannon Birch		√	
Jonathan Bird		√	
Bronwen Brooks		√	
Lis Burnett		√	
George Carroll	√		
Christine Cave	√		
Janice Charles	√		
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox		√	
Robert Crowley	√		
A.R.T Davies	√		
Pamela Drake		√	
Vince Driscoll	√		
Stewart Edwards	√		
Ben Gray		√	
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths	√		
Anthony Hampton	√		
Sally Hanks		√	
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie		√	
Gwyn John		√	
Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp	√		
Peter King		√	

Kevin Mahoney	√		
Kathryn McCaffer		√	
Anne Moore		√	
Neil Moore		√	
Michael Morgan		√	
Jayne Norman		√	
Rachel Nugent-Finn	√		
Andrew Parker		√	
Bob Penrose	√		
Sandra Perkes		√	
Andrew Robertson	√		
Leighton Rowlands	√		
Ruba Sivagnanam		√	
John Thomas		√	
Neil Thomas		√	
Steffan Wiliam	√		
Margaret Wilkinson		√	
Edward Williams		√	
Mark Wilson		√	
Marguerita Wright	√		
TOTAL	21	25	

The Motion was Lost.

287 NOTICE OF MOTION (SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS K.P. MAHONEY AND R.A. PENROSE) -

(iii) Transparency 3 – That all substantive votes carried out in Vale of Glamorgan Council Scrutiny Committee meetings be automatically recorded by name and the result including names, displayed clearly in the subsequent minutes of that meeting.

Councillor Mahoney, in referring to the Motion (seconded by Councillor Penrose) stated that his reasons for bringing the Motion were the same as previously advised in the meeting requested that a Recorded Vote be taken.

Councillor Wilson, as Chair of the Scrutiny Committees Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group and the Scrutiny Champion, advised that he was concerned with the request to have recorded votes at Scrutiny meetings. He considered that constructive and positive debate currently took place and that to have every issue voted upon and recorded would, in his view, stop the constructive dialogue when considering the performance of the Council and how its services were run.

Councillor Morgan considered that the current system worked well. As and when an e-voting system for the recording of votes was available, until then, he considered the Council was wasting time discussing such matters when live broadcasting and recordings were already available to the public and alike.

Councillor Dr. Johnson, in agreeing that affirmation at Committees did indeed work well, considered that an e-voting system would be beneficial.

Councillor N. Thomas advised that if an e-voting system was to be considered that would be appropriate, but it was not on the agenda for discussion, however, he did suggest that the Motion, in his view, would be more credible if Councillors Mahoney and Penrose took up their entitlement to seats on Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor Penrose advised that he did not sit on a Scrutiny Committee as he objected to the use of the Widdicombe formula under the law used for allocating seats on Council Committees.

Councillor Dr. Johnson moved an alteration to the Motion to include after meeting the inclusion of the following “and that the Vale of Glamorgan Council ensures that an electronic method of voting is provided”. Councillor Mahoney consented to the proposed alteration which was then put to a vote.

A Recorded Vote subsequently took place on whether the alteration to the Motion was consented to as follows:

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet		√	
Rhiannon Birch		√	
Jonathan Bird		√	
Bronwen Brooks		√	
Lis Burnett		√	

George Carroll	√		
Christine Cave	√		
Janice Charles	√		
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox		√	
Robert Crowley	√		
A.R.T Davies	√		
Pamela Drake		√	
Vince Driscoll	√		
Stewart Edwards	√		
Ben Gray		√	
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths	√		
Anthony Hampton	√		
Sally Hanks		√	
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie		√	
Gwyn John		√	
Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp	√		
Peter King		√	
Kevin Mahoney	√		
Kathryn McCaffer		√	
Anne Moore		√	
Neil Moore		√	
Michael Morgan		√	

Jayne Norman		√	
Rachel Nugent-Finn	√		
Andrew Parker		√	
Bob Penrose	√		
Sandra Perkes		√	
Andrew Robertson	√		
Leighton Rowlands	√		
Ruba Sivagnanam		√	
John Thomas		√	
Neil Thomas		√	
Steffan Wiliam	√		
Margaret Wilkinson		√	
Edward Williams		√	
Mark Wilson		√	
Marguerita Wright	√		
TOTAL	21	25	

The request to alter the Motion was Lost.

Councillor Mahoney, in response, advised that his attendance record was 100% and that it could be viewed on the website and that he had decided to give up his membership of the Scrutiny Committee as he considered the Scrutiny process to be useless.

Councillor Wilson took the opportunity to invite Councillor Mahoney to attend all future Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee meetings.

A Recorded Vote then took place on the original Motion as follows :

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet		√	
Rhiannon Birch		√	

Jonathan Bird		√	
Bronwen Brooks		√	
Lis Burnett		√	
George Carroll	√		
Christine Cave	√		
Janice Charles	√		
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox		√	
Robert Crowley	√		
A.R.T Davies	√		
Pamela Drake		√	
Vince Driscoll	√		
Stewart Edwards	√		
Ben Gray		√	
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths	√		
Anthony Hampton	√		
Sally Hanks		√	
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie		√	
Gwyn John		√	
Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp	√		
Peter King		√	
Kevin Mahoney	√		

Kathryn McCaffer		√	
Anne Moore		√	
Neil Moore		√	
Michael Morgan		√	
Jayne Norman		√	
Rachel Nugent-Finn	√		
Andrew Parker		√	
Bob Penrose	√		
Sandra Perkes		√	
Andrew Robertson	√		
Leighton Rowlands	√		
Ruba Sivagnanam		√	
John Thomas		√	
Neil Thomas		√	
Steffan William	√		
Margaret Wilkinson		√	
Edward Williams		√	
Mark Wilson		√	
Marguerita Wright	√		
TOTAL	21	25	

The Motion was Lost.

288 NOTICE OF MOTION (SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS K.P. MAHONEY AND R.A. PENROSE) –

(iv) Transparency 4 – That all Councillors' contributions to Vale of Glamorgan Council, Full, Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings are identified by name and those contributions including names, be clearly displayed in the subsequent minutes of that meeting.

Councillor Mahoney, in presenting the Motion (seconded by Councillor Penrose) advised that it was beneficial in his view that the names of contributors were recorded in the minutes. Although he was aware that this had recently been instigated.

Councillor Wilson advised that under the Constitution any Member had the right to amend the accuracy of minutes and could also ask for their views to be attributed at the time the minutes were approved by the respective Committee.

Councillor Dr. Johnson considered that it made sense for comments to be attributed where appropriate.

Councillor Hodges took the opportunity to advise Council that he was preparing a Motion for the next Council meeting for the introduction of e-voting but hoped that this could be considered before the Motion was submitted for discussion.

Councillor Bird asked whether a report could be prepared for a future meeting on e-voting.

Councillor King reiterated his view that all comments and votes could be viewed from the live broadcast and recording of the meeting.

Councillor Burnett raised her concern as to the interpretation of the Motion and the word that "contributions" be noted in the minutes which, in her view, would mean that the minutes would need to be verbatim and would therefore also, in her view, require approval from each contributor.

The Leader echoed the comments of Councillor Burnett, advising that the recordings would be available for all to view.

Councillor Carroll stated that he would not be calling for verbatim detailed minutes and was satisfied with the words of the Motion.

Councillor Gray indicated that he felt that the wording of the Motion would mean all contributions would need to be recorded and that in his view would not be appropriate, as for example anything a Member said even if they were just agreeing with something that was said would have to be recorded in the minutes, should the Motion be carried.

Councillor Mahoney, prior to his summation, sought clarification as to how many occasions speakers could contribute to the debate on a Motion.

In conclusion Councillor Mahoney commented that the length of minutes and / or a meeting should not be a reason to oppose the Motion.

A Recorded Vote took place on the above Motion as follows:

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet		√	
Rhiannon Birch		√	
Jonathan Bird		√	
Bronwen Brooks		√	
Lis Burnett		√	
George Carroll	√		
Christine Cave	√		
Janice Charles	√		
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox		√	
Robert Crowley	√		
A.R.T Davies	√		
Pamela Drake		√	
Vince Driscoll	√		
Stewart Edwards	√		
Ben Gray		√	
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths	√		
Anthony Hampton	√		
Sally Hanks		√	
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie		√	
Gwyn John		√	
Ian Johnson	√		

Gordon Kemp	√		
Peter King		√	
Kevin Mahoney	√		
Kathryn McCaffer		√	
Anne Moore		√	
Neil Moore		√	
Michael Morgan		√	
Jayne Norman		√	
Rachel Nugent-Finn	√		
Andrew Parker		√	
Bob Penrose	√		
Sandra Perkes		√	
Andrew Robertson	√		
Leighton Rowlands	√		
Ruba Sivagnanam		√	
John Thomas		√	
Neil Thomas		√	
Steffan Wiliam	√		
Margaret Wilkinson		√	
Edward Williams		√	
Mark Wilson		√	
Marguerita Wright	√		
TOTAL	21	25	

The Motion was Lost.

289 NOTICE OF MOTION (SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS L. BURNETT AND N.C. THOMAS) –

Declaration of Nature Emergency.

Councillor Burnett, in presenting the Motion, advised that she was no expert and at best was an enthusiastic amateur who enjoyed and valued nature and the environment in all its forms. Councillor Burnett stated that she had been repeatedly told the difference between Dragonflies and Damselflies and types of Orchid or species of bird but still had to use the App on her phone to check. Two years previously the Council declared a Climate Emergency and later in the meeting would hopefully be approving the Climate Change Challenge Plan. Much work and many conversations had happened since 2019 although not as much as she would have liked but there had been a global pandemic. Councillor Burnett stated that most recognised that Climate Change and Nature were inextricably linked however in the consultations and conversations that took place people were clear of the need to be more explicit.

She alluded to an interesting debate on nature emergency had taken place in the Senedd June 21 moved by Sian Gwenllian MS. Climate change could mean that species and the food they needed were out of sync for example, food caterpillars, blue tits and great tits, impact of honeybees on the population of wild bees and other pollinators as had been seen with red and grey squirrels. During that debate reference was also made to how the Council could get involved in related initiatives.

Councillor Burnett advised Council that much was indeed happening and made reference to the following initiatives:

- Changes to grass cutting meant that on just one uncut verge at Fonmon hundreds of Pyramidal Orchids and a host of other wildlife had been spotted;
- There had been a sighting of the rare Carrot mining bee (only the second in Wales);
- People in Penarth were creating hedgehog highways;
- Green infrastructure schemes included green walls and amphibian ladders in drains;
- Vale schools were planting orchards; the new swales for sustainable water management would provide valuable resources for wildlife and there would be bird and bat boxes and hibernacula. Children were conducting their own habitat and species surveys;
- The Council was actively supporting the Nature Recovery Action Plan being produced by the Local Nature Partnership.

Protecting biodiversity was as important as tackling Climate Change and as community leaders, Councillor Burnett stated that Members had an opportunity tonight to make sure both were fundamental to the work of the Council.

Councillor Burnett (seconded by Councillor N. Thomas) stated that the Motion was before Council seeking that the Council sign up to a target of no net loss of biodiversity in the Vale of Glamorgan by:

- Declaring a nature emergency and placing biodiversity alongside Climate Change at the heart of decision making;
- Working with and making representations to Welsh and UK Governments so that the Council had the necessary powers, resources and technical support to achieve its aim;
- Working with anyone and everyone to develop and implement a strategy aligned with Project Zero.

Councillor John, in indicating support, sought an assurance that all Council departments would adhere to the Declaration if approved. Some projects undertaken through Planning and Welsh Government proposals had not, in his view, in referring to the Climate Change Declaration, had full co-operation.

Councillor Mahoney, in concurring with Councillor John, also referred to the Model Farm proposals of building over farm land and hedgerows.

Councillor N. Thomas, as Secunder to the Motion, stated that the present situation was having a dramatic effect on biodiversity and was not sustainable. Biodiversity of a locale was interlinked with individual specimens reliant on the health of other members of that system; the butterfly depended on the plant upon which it laid its eggs for its caterpillars to eat and if the plant was lost the butterfly would also be lost. There were also pressures on wild bees and other pollinators due to loss of nectar bearing plants generally coupled with the pesticides and herbicides that were killing both them and their food sources. Many indigenous species were being lost and there was catastrophic collapse in the hedgehog population with the many causes for this including traffic, but all were human linked.

Farming was often held up as one of the supports for biodiversity, but the reverse was too often the case. Referring to monoculture crop growing and grazing where indigenous plants were eradicated creating ecological green coloured deserts. Some pointed to commercial seed growers as helping in this but again, the limited numbers of varieties in the average supermarket seed packets demonstrated that such farming methods were actually contributing to the problem and purchasers were being duped into thinking they were helping. The Motion he felt should encourage farmers and landowners to look for ways to improve their management of the land to support natural diversity. Rewilding and preservation of ancient broadleaf woodland along with planting new woodlands with the most useful plants for supporting biodiversity would also have a benefit in fighting climate change but similar planting in the urban environment could also moderate some of the extremes being faced while benefiting biodiversity. A better tree canopy was proven to contribute to local cooling in the recent heatwave in parts of the localities that were lucky enough to have enough, it could also help in very cold conditions by providing a kind of blanketing effect.

He further highlighted that hedgerows were rich in variety and when well managed could provide corridors for animal movement and improve genetic mixing but worked

far better when field margins were allowed to grow undisturbed rather than crops being planted on every available centimetre.

There were also moves in the UK government to remove protections from many native species to remove obstacles that developers complained about that they alleged caused delays. There was a need to use planning as a driver for environmental and ecological protections and the Motion would give the Council a role in trying to alter the present situation for the benefit of biodiversity.

Support for the declaration of a nature emergency would, he stated, give the Vale of Glamorgan the authority to pursue the aims and resolutions detailed to protect its biodiversity for future generations.

Councillor Charles, in referring to the Natural Resources Biodiversity Wales report, which she stated provided useful information that the Council could consider, advised that she would be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Dr. Johnson enquired what difference passing an emergency would make in terms of legal protections if as a Council it was not acted upon and what the impact would be on current and future policies.

Councillor Gray indicated that the decisions at the Planning Committee were made on planning evidence presented. However, he acknowledged the point that the Council's policies may need to be changed in the future.

Councillor Wilson echoed Councillor Gray's comments.

Councillor Hodges, in referring to the Motion, advised that planning did affect building on fields and added to the climate change and nature emergency and, in his view, either he felt that the Council should take a stance on the issue quickly and how it would promote planning policy reflecting the nature emergency.

Councillor Williams, as Cabinet Member for Planning and Legal and Regulatory Services, recognised that decisions had to be made, including compromises such as those identified in the Motion which, in his view, should be made.

In summing up, Councillor Burnett stated that very few choices in life were binary as there were always choices to be made for the people of the Vale and that, in her view, was the reason why Community Leaders were needed. With regard to Model Farm planning matter, she encouraged all to view the Planning Committee meeting broadcast recording and read the reports submitted by the ecologists. She also reminded Council that during the ensuing pandemic green spaces had become more and more important and people were re-engaging with nature.

The Motion if passed would assist in changing policy as the climate change plan would.

There being no dissent it was -

RESOLVED – T H A T the Declaration of a Nature Emergency as follows be endorsed:

- (1) Declare a nature emergency, in response to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and National Biodiversity Network (NBN) reports and in recognition of the inextricable link between climate change and the loss of biodiversity.
- (2) Place biodiversity alongside climate change at the heart of decision making in the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- (3) Welcome Welsh Government's support for the Convention on Biological Diversity post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- (4) Engage with the anticipated Global Biodiversity Framework with clear goals and targets, following the convention in October, with an aim of achieving no net loss of biodiversity.
- (5) Make representations to the Welsh and UK Governments, as appropriate, to provide the necessary powers, resources and technical support to local authorities in Wales to help them successfully achieve this aim.
- (6) Continue to work with partners across the county, region and nationally to develop and implement best practice methods that can protect Wales' biodiversity.
- (7) Work with local stakeholders including Councillors, residents, young people, businesses and other relevant parties, to develop a strategy aligned with Project Zero with a target of no net loss of biodiversity that will also explore ways to maximise the local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, agriculture, transport and the economy.

290 NOTICE OF MOTION (SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS G.D.D. CARROLL AND L.O. ROWLANDS) –

Councillor Carroll, in presenting the Motion, indicated that it had been submitted following concerns made by local businesses.

In referring to the difficult 16 months the hospitality trade had faced as a result of the pandemic there had been hope with the emergence of outdoor dining and congratulated the Council on the work undertaken to support businesses during this period. However, the Council had now agreed to reintroduce fees for businesses placing tables and chairs on the highway outside their premises and called for the Council to continue to suspend the fees until after the pandemic.

Councillor Rowlands, in seconding the Motion, stated that the hospitality sector had had a tough time over the months and some businesses had gone out of business. Many traders in the Vale had also been in touch regarding the reintroduction of the fees. Businesses he said needed breathing room on the road to recovery. A press release in a newspaper advised that in England alfresco dining would boost the

economy. No other Local Authority he was aware of had reintroduced such charges and requested that the charges be reserved until at least the pandemic was over.

Councillor Charles commented that introducing fees would have an impact on businesses who may not be able to pay the fees and therefore encourage inside hospitality whereas outdoor facilities would assist the control of the spread of the virus. Businesses were still recovering from the impact of the pandemic and outside dining would benefit businesses on the road to recovery which charging would hinder.

Councillor Robertson considered that the reintroduction of fees was inappropriate at this time.

Councillor King, as Cabinet Member with the responsibility for the service area, advised that other Local Authorities such as Cardiff, Newport and he thought Bridgend had indeed implemented charges at the same time the Vale had. When the placing of tables and chairs had been introduced during the pandemic there had been a number of enforcement issues with some businesses abusing the initiative and spilling over onto the highway, resulting in antisocial behaviour. Councillor King considered that all interested parties needed to work together and be equitable. He also considered that the fee was fair and proportionate to reflect costs incurred by the Council such as the need for enforcement and to ensure Council Taxpayers did not foot those costs. The fees to be levied were considerably smaller at £12.50 per month when compared to those Councils like Cardiff. Business had the option of paying the monthly fee or a one-off yearly payment. The monthly instalment option reflected and recognised cashflow issues experienced by the sector. This approach had been broadly welcomed by traders in the Vale during consultation on the initial proposals and he did not accept both Members' assertion as set out in the Motion.

Councillor Dr. Johnson stated that the Cabinet Member had made a logical point regarding the need for regulation and enforcement. Whether the charges would be considered appropriate or should be less or more was yet to be borne out. He also pointed out that the matter had also been considered by the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee where it had been discussed and that he had raised a concern over the figures contained within the report in that they did not make sense, with the report being referred back to Cabinet with the subsequent agreement of the Leader to review the detail of the scheme. Following that review, the figures were amended. The period of the review had provided in effect a three month delay in the introduction of fees, thereby saving businesses costs during that time. Neither Councillor Carroll nor Councillor Driscoll as he recalled raised any concerns or spoke on the matter at the February Scrutiny meeting when the reports were presented. Whilst there was indeed a point to the Motion, he considered it to be disingenuous as the matter had not been raised or discussed at that time.

Councillor Driscoll advised that he had spoken on the matter to query what revenue the scheme would return for the Council.

Councillor Burnett, in referring to the scheme, also reminded Council that it had been broadly welcomed by businesses. It was important that it was on record that during the pandemic there were a number of costs borne by the Authority which included

support to the trade, related advice plans, street layouts / markings and enforcement requirements. A number of businesses had also thanked the Council for its support and advise at the time. A small contribution was not an unreasonable request.

Councillor Wilson referred to the need for the service to be regulated and well managed as opposed to being unmanaged and open to abuse. He also took the opportunity to urge local businesses to contact Councillors if they had any issues as working together was key.

Councillor Morgan, in echoing Councillor Wilson's comments, was of the view that the charges were indeed proportionate and covered the costs of the licence and enforcement and it was not a profit making exercise for the Council.

Councillor Mahoney commented that in his view he felt the public wished to support businesses and asked that the fees at this stage be delayed.

Councillor Brooks, as Chair of Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, advised that there had been robust discussion at the Scrutiny meeting at the time, but having read the report and indeed having regard to comments that she had received from a number of small business that the charges to be reduced and the introduction of the monthly payments facility had been of huge benefit to them and that the space they had paid for was protected by regulation and fairer than the previous system.

Councillor Kemp indicated that he did not disagree that regulation of the pavements was required, but in his view it was not the appropriate time for the charges to be reintroduced.

Councillor Williams concurred that regulation was required.

In summing up, Councillor Carroll thanked all Members for their comments and concurred that pavements should be regulated, but that licences could still operate with fees being suspended. He considered that the Council should not underestimate the impact of the fees on businesses. With regard to the costs to be incurred by the Council, he considered that the Council should absorb the costs for now based and requested that the Motion be supported.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council:

- Regrets the Administration's decision to reintroduce fees for businesses placing tables and chairs on the highway outside their premises;
- Appreciates the unprecedented impacts the Coronavirus pandemic had caused local cafes, bars and restaurants, who have been unable to operate at full capacity;
- Recognises that outdoor dining has provided businesses with much needed relief and has enabled them to mitigate some of the losses they have suffered during the pandemic;
- Calls on the Administration to reverse its decision to introduce the charges at least until the pandemic is over.

A Recorded Vote took place on the Motion as follows:

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet		√	
Rhiannon Birch		√	
Jonathan Bird		√	
Bronwen Brooks		√	
Lis Burnett		√	
George Carroll	√		
Christine Cave	√		
Janice Charles	√		
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox		√	
Robert Crowley	√		
A.R.T Davies	√		
Pamela Drake		√	
Vince Driscoll	√		
Stewart Edwards	√		
Ben Gray		√	
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths	√		
Anthony Hampton	√		
Sally Hanks		√	
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie		√	
Gwyn John		√	

Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp	√		
Peter King		√	
Kevin Mahoney	√		
Kathryn McCaffer		√	
Anne Moore		√	
Neil Moore		√	
Michael Morgan		√	
Jayne Norman		√	
Rachel Nugent-Finn	√		
Andrew Parker		√	
Bob Penrose	√		
Sandra Perkes		√	
Andrew Robertson	√		
Leighton Rowlands	√		
Ruba Sivagnanam		√	
John Thomas		√	
Neil Thomas		√	
Steffan William	√		
Margaret Wilkinson		√	
Edward Williams		√	
Mark Wilson		√	
Marguerita Wright	√		
TOTAL	21	25	

The Motion was Lost.

291 USE OF THE MANAGING DIRECTORS'S EMERGENCY POWERS (MD) –

The following use of the Managing Director's Emergency Powers was reported:

(a) CCTV Contract Extension

To extend the current CCTV contract with Bridgend County Borough Council.

(Scrutiny – Homes and Safe Communities)

(b) Attendance at Local Authority Meetings

Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act requires the Local Authority to make and publish its arrangements for ensuring that meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility to enable persons who are not in the same place to attend meetings.

(Scrutiny – Corporate Performance and Resources)

(c) Confirmation of Article 4(2) Direction in respect of the Property known as Greenfields, East Street, Llantwit Major, CF61 1XY

To provide delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Operational Manager for Legal Services on the instruction of the Head of Regeneration and Planning / Operational Manager for Planning and Development Control to confirm an Article 4(2) Direction made on 20th January, 2021 in respect of the above property.

(Scrutiny – Environment and Regeneration)

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Managing Director's Emergency Powers be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the Council's Constitution.

292 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION (MD) –

The Leader sought Council approval to amend the Council's Constitution in regard to the following:

An additional officer delegation within the Council's Constitution be granted in relation to the confirmation of Article 4 Notices to prevent development and / or demolition that may otherwise be permitted development.

To amend the current Family Absence Provisions as set out in Section 4 of the Council's Constitution following the introduction of the Family Absence for Members

of Local Authorities (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 which came into force on 1st April, 2021. The revised Procedure was attached at Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the change to the relevant officer delegation as set out below be approved and the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly:

Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with Head of Regeneration and Planning or Operational Manager (Planning and Building Control) –

“To confirm an Article 4 Notice served to prevent development and / or demolition that may otherwise be permitted development.”

(2) T H A T the revised Procedure Rules in respect of Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities attached at Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted and that Section 4 of the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly

Reasons for decisions

(1) To update the officer delegation scheme to reflect an additional responsibility relating to Article 4 Notices served by the Council.

(2) To reflect the introduction of the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 from 1st April, 2021.

293 GUIDE TO PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE REVIEW (REF) –

Councillor Bird (Chair of the Planning Committee) presented the reference, advising that the Council's current Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee had been in operation since 1st February, 2015 and was available to the public on the Council's website. At the 24th March, 2021 Planning Committee Meeting, the Committee received for consideration a report setting out details of a review of the Guide that had been undertaken including, highlighting proposed revisions to the current version of the Guide aimed at further promoting the Public Speaking arrangements at Planning Committee meetings. The Committee subsequently endorsed the proposed / updated version of the Guide subject to the inclusion of two amendments which were highlighted in red within the version of the Guide presented to Full Council this evening.

Subject to the approval and adoption of the revised Guide by Council, the Guide would be made available on the Council's website as well as referred to the Community Liaison Committee for information. A further review of the Guide was proposed sometime during the 2022 Local Government Election Term.

The Leader commented that following approval by Council the Guide would take immediate effect.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the revised draft Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee ('the Guide') attached at Appendix A to the reference (which had been updated and had incorporated the proposals agreed by the Planning Committee) be approved and the Council's Constitution and the website updated accordingly.

2) T H A T the Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee ('the Guide'), as approved take immediate effect.

(3) That a copy of the Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee ('the Guide'), as approved under Resolution (1) above be referred to the Community Liaison Committee.

Reasons for decisions

(1&2) To ensure that the revised version of 'the Guide' is available to individuals who wish to speak at Planning Committee.

(3) To ensure that the revised version of 'the Guide' is made available to all Town and Community Councils for their information and future use.

294 AUDIT WALES – SCRUTINY FIT FOR THE FUTURE ACTION PLAN UPDATE (REF) –

Councillor Wilson (Chair of the Scrutiny Committees Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group), in presenting the reference, informed Council that the current Guide to Public Participation at Scrutiny Committee meetings had been in operation since 2015 and was available to the public on the Council's website. Following a review of the Guide the revised Guide appended to the reference had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group in March 2021 and referred to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee in April 2021 for consideration. The Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet consider and approve the Guide for approval by Full Council which was agreed by Cabinet on 12th May, 2021. The Guide had also been revised having regard to current regulations, current Council procedures for remote meetings and feedback received from public speakers who had attended previous Scrutiny Committee meetings

Subject to the approval and adoption of the revised Guide by Council, the Guide would be made available on the Council's website and would be monitored with the intention that a further review be undertaken sometime during the next Local Government Election Term.

RESOLVED – T H A T the Revised Scrutiny Public Participation Guide attached as an Appendix to the reference be approved and uploaded to the Council's website and the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.

Reason for decision

To ensure that the revised version of the Scrutiny Public Participation Guide is available to individuals who wish to speak at Scrutiny Committees.

295 LICENSING ACT 2003 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2021/2026 (REF) –

Councillor J. Thomas (Chair of the Licensing Committee) presented the reference requesting that Council approve the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021/26 subject to the additions that had been agreed by the Licensing Committee and Cabinet which he clarified at the meeting as below.

Councillor Thomas added that there was nothing to prevent the Council from reviewing the Policy again in a shorter period of time should it be deemed necessary.

RESOLVED – T H A T the draft Statement of Licensing Policy attached as an Appendix to the reference be approved subject to the additions below as agreed by the Statutory Licensing Committee and Cabinet:

- To insert a paragraph in Section 17 as follows to recognise the South Wales Police Traffic Light System as a method on which representations or reviews are submitted:

"An example of a recognised early warning system is the Traffic Light System operated by South Wales Police. Any information supplied to the licensing authority as part of representations or a review process will be considered in light of the broad principles set out in the Shared Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy of Proportionate, Accountable, Consistent, Transparent, and Targeted. If such an enforcement tool is used, the licensing authority will expect to receive information on how the points system was allocated, the interaction with the licensee, what interventions had already been carried out, and the risk to the licensing objectives which underpin the representations/review submitted".

- To substitute the word "should" by "must" in Section 14 in the following paragraph:

"Operators of premises of this type must consider measures to prevent crime and disorder on, or emanating from, their premises."

Reason for decision

Having regard to the resolutions of the Statutory Licensing Committee, Cabinet and to provide approval.

296 PROJECT ZERO – DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE PLAN (REF) –

The Leader advised that the draft Plan set out the Council's response to the Climate Emergency and detailed some of the work already underway across the Council and the proposed timetable.

Councillor Dr. Johnson thanked the officers for developing the Plan and undertaking the extensive consultation that had taken place. In referring to the debate at the recent Planning Committee re the Model Farm development, he raised his concern in respect of that debate and how planning was to be incorporated within the Plan going forward.

The Leader also commented that when policies were established they would need to be considered, together with the LDP, within the Plan in the future.

RESOLVED – T H A T the draft Climate Change Challenge Plan as referred by Cabinet Minute No. C621, 5th July, 2021 be approved.

Reason for decision

To confirm approval of the draft Climate Change Challenge Plan.

297 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21 (REF) –

The Leader advised that the report outlined the Council's Treasury Management operations for the period 1st April, 2020 to 31st March, 2021 and the significant financial impact that the pandemic had had in the UK and across the world.

The pandemic had had a substantial impact on interest rate forecasts which were detailed in para 1.7 of the report. As a result, the investment returns during the past year had been low. Cash flow forecasting had also been problematic during the year as the Council incurred additional costs in order to provide the services needed by individuals and businesses during the pandemic.

The Council's primary objectives for the management of its investments was to give priority to the security and liquidity of its funds before seeking the best rate of return. Prior to 2020/21 the Council had placed investments with other Local Authorities and Management Account Deposit Facility which was guaranteed by the British Government. During the year the yield on this Facility had been negative, therefore two Money Market Accounts had been opened together with two higher earning accounts with Lloyds Bank to improve the return on the investments made.

In 2020/21 the Council continued to finance a significant proportion of its capital expenditure from internal resources. As a result the Council's external borrowing was well within the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary set for 2020/21 and therefore limited the debt charges that were paid during the year.

Insofar as the Council's Treasury Management operations entered into for 2020/21 were concerned, all Treasury Management activity undertaken during the financial year complied with the amended approved strategy, the CIPFA Code of Practice and the relevant legislative provisions.

RESOLVED – T H A T the proposals of the Cabinet, as set out in Cabinet Minute No. C631, 19th July, 201 be approved.

Reason for decision

To confirm approval of the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2020/21.

298 DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY (1) AND (5) (REF) –

The report sought Council approval to make a Diverse Council Declaration by the end of July 2021 and the establishment of a Diversity in Democracy Working Group of the Democratic Services Committee to progress the WLGA Council recommendations and any other actions identified to compliment the work of Welsh Government's proposed Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) for an Anti-Racist Wales and associated goals for local government.

The Leader advised that the report also sought to encourage a declaration by July 2021 from Councils in Wales, on becoming 'Diverse Councils'; to:

- i) Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
- ii) Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
- iii) Consider staggering Council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support Councillors with other commitments; and
- iv) Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections and he requested that as part of supporting the Council to develop an inclusive culture and one that was respectful of gender identity across the spectrum, the principle of amending the Council's Constitution to reflect the use of gender-neutral terminology be endorsed.

Councillor Rowlands, reflecting on his own personal circumstances, indicated that he did not agree with being put on a list with regard to sexual orientation. He considered that capability to carry out the role was more important and sought clarification of the use of voluntary quotas. He was generally not in favour of the use of quotas or formalising resettlement payments to Members leaving the Council, standing down or not re-elected. However, he did support changes to meeting times to support childcare duties.

The Leader in response advised that the intention was to encourage political parties to make attempts to encourage diversity and all Leaders of the Local Authorities had signed up to the pledge.

Councillor O. Griffiths, agreeing with the comments that Local Government needed to be truly representative of society and that all aspects of equality needed to be met, indicated that he struggled with the proposal as he thought it was missing inclusion

and the fact that the current Administration had within its Cabinet and senior salary positions appointed positions, white individuals only. There was more to diversity than gender equality and considered the Administration had failed to be inclusive.

Councillor Mahoney stated that he was not in support of the recommendations of the WLGA and WG and felt they should not be telling Councils what to do.

Councillor Sivagnanam reminded Council that the report's intention and making the Declaration was about making Councils an open and welcoming place for all communities and she hoped all in the Council would be committed to this. This was about removing barriers so that all people had the opportunity to become a Councillor.

The Leader thanked Councillor Sivagnanam for her comments, advising that he considered the Council to be inclusive and that everyone had the opportunity to advance themselves. The Cabinet was also in his view a gender balanced Cabinet.

A Recorded Vote took place on the Resolutions of Cabinet of 19th July, 2021 as below:

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet	√		
Rhiannon Birch	√		
Jonathan Bird	√		
Bronwen Brooks	√		
Lis Burnett	√		
George Carroll			√
Christine Cave			√
Janice Charles			√
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox	√		
Robert Crowley			√
A.R.T Davies			√
Pamela Drake	√		
Vince Driscoll			√

Stewart Edwards			√
Ben Gray	√		
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths			√
Anthony Hampton			√
Sally Hanks	√		
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie	√		
Gwyn John	√		
Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp			√
Peter King	√		
Kevin Mahoney		√	
Kathryn McCaffer	√		
Anne Moore	√		
Neil Moore	√		
Michael Morgan	√		
Jayne Norman	√		
Rachel Nugent-Finn			√
Andrew Parker	√		
Bob Penrose			√
Sandra Perkes	√		
Andrew Robertson			√
Leighton Rowlands			√
Ruba Sivagnanam	√		
John Thomas	√		

Neil Thomas	√		
Steffan Wiliam	√		
Margaret Wilkinson	√		
Edward Williams	√		
Mark Wilson	√		
Marguerita Wright			√
TOTAL	30	1	15

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the making of the following Vale of Glamorgan “Diverse Council” Declaration be approved:

“The Vale of Glamorgan Council will:

- (i) Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
- (ii) Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
- (iii) Consider staggering Council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support Councillors with other commitments; and
- (iv) Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 Local Government Elections.”

(2) T H A T as part of supporting the Council to develop an inclusive culture and one that is respectful of gender identity across the spectrum, the principle of amending the Council’s Constitution to reflect the use of gender-neutral terminology be endorsed.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To support the WLGA Council recommendation to make the Declaration by the end of July 2021.

(2) The Diversity in Democracy programme aims to advance gender equality and diversity in Councils before the 2022 elections and to amend the Council’s Constitution accordingly.

299 THE U.K. GOVERNMENT LEVELLING UP AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUNDS BID GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C582 (7th June, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council’s Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

300 EMERGENCY AND PERMANENT DEFECTS – HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C609 (21st June, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

301 CONSULTATION RESPONSE: WELSH GOVERNMENT'S RACE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR THE ANTI-RACIST WALES (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C625 (5th July, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

302 DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY (6) (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C635 (19th July, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

303 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT EXTENSION (PART I) (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C643 (19th July, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

304 REVIEW OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C645 (19th July, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

305 DRAFT MEMBER INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2022 (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C646 (19th July, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

306 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C647 (19th July, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

307 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT EXTENSION (PART II) (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C651 (19th July, 2021)) as set out in Section 14.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

308 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO SECTION 4.18 OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION –

The following responses to Member questions as contained within the agenda were presented:

(i) **Question from Councillor J.E. Charles**

Whilst I understand that temporary staff from agencies can provide a useful way to plug short term skills gaps in the workforce, we need to ensure that the taxpayer is not overly burdened with unnecessary costs such as agency fees. With that in mind, How many Agency Staff do we currently have working directly for the Council, and will the Cabinet Member confirm the total spend on agency fees for those staff employed on temporary agency contracts for the financial year 2019/20?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

During week ending 4th July, 2021, a total of 217 agency workers were working directly with the Council.

In relation to the question on total spend for 2019/20, the Council entered into a new Agency Vendor Neutral Contract in November 2019, using a new computerised booking system, therefore, providing data for 2019/20 is not straightforward. However, total spend for the financial year 2020/21 is £6,868,090.

This is a saving of £290,580 based on the previous agency contract due to new agency framework rates.

Supplemental

Councillor Charles enquired as to how long each agency person had been employed and requested a breakdown of the short and long-term figures for agency workers.

The Leader agreed to obtain the information and forward the same to all Members of the Council. However, the Leader also advised that it was important to note that some agency positions were part-time positions, related to the nature of the job involved and that some workers also preferred to work on an agency basis.

(ii) **Question from Councillor J.E. Charles**

What are you doing to ensure any new buildings or refurbishment in the Vale of Glamorgan do have integrated green energy technologies and best practise energy efficiency measures?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services

The excellent work undertaken within a range of departments has enabled the Council to proceed as it has these included a range of measures and activities taking place for example Building Control, Planning Processes and Policies, Staff Training, changes to fabric and the design for a net zero carbon primary school building the first in Wales.

Part L of the Building Regulations focused on the conservation of fuel and power, as set out by Welsh Government which provided targets that new and existing buildings are required to meet.

The Council had a number of planning policies designed to improve and encourage sustainable building design through the planning process wherever possible. For example, it introduced the requirement for electric vehicle charging parking in its Parking Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance before Welsh Government did in the new National Development Plan.

When building new homes, the Council has adopted a 'fabric first' approach, meaning that the building form and structural elements of the scheme are the primary design principles by which improved energy performance will be achieved. The Council has specified that all new homes will be built using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and utilise Off-Site Manufacturing techniques to improve the energy performance of the building fabric. Energy efficient heating and water systems mean 't that any new homes would not rely on the gas network from 2025.

The Council's Housing Development Programme Manager was also Chair of the Delivering Net Zero Carbon Project Steering Group. The Delivering Net Zero project has been formed by the 11 stock retained Councils (Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea, Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham) and a small number of housing associations (Cartrefi Conwy, Coastal and United Welsh).

In terms of the 21st Century Schools Programme, following the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Council launched a project to enhance sustainability as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme. The Council had developed a design for a net zero (operational) carbon primary school building which was currently being delivered for Llancarfan Primary School in Rhoose. Llancarfan would be the first net zero (operational) carbon primary school in Wales. Overall, the Council had successfully secured more than £2.4m Welsh Government funding to support the delivery of net-zero carbon schools across the Vale.

Supplemental

Councillor Charles sought assurance that the long-term cost / benefits of transition had been taking into account.

In response the Cabinet Member advised that plans would comply with the new regulations and guidelines and suggested that the relevant Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider a detailed report on the matter to a future meeting.

(iii) Question from Councillor C.A. Cave

In the Rural Vale we have narrow, often pothole-ridden roads that were not designed for today's mix and volume of traffic. Since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic, (and arguably well before this), we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of people (walking, cycling, and running etc.) on our rural roads. This type of activity is likely to continue to increase as people rediscover the physical and psychological benefits of exercising in rural locations. Does the Cabinet Member agree that Welsh Government failed the rural communities by not including rural locations in their recent Active Travel Plan Consultation?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Cabinet Member advised that they had been aware that Councillor Cave had attended a recent Active Travel Seminar facilitated by Sustrans as part of the Council's Active Travel Network Maps consultation, where it was explained why rural areas were not included in the process and why the Council was looking at 8 designated localities of Barry, Penarth, Rhoose, Llantwit Major, St. Athan, Sully, Cowbridge and Dinas Powys. As advised at that seminar, Councillors were still able to advise the Council about active travel issues outside of the proposed locations, with the main focus being to improve areas where there was the greatest need for change and highest potential for more people to choose active travel. Welsh Government would be focusing on the limited amount of funding available to the areas with the greatest potential for modal shift.

Welsh Government had also recently given Local Authorities the opportunity to bid for additional active travel funding with one area for consideration being rural localities. The Cabinet Member advised that officers had applied for the maximum sum permitted under the scheme and had identified a number of projects that it was hoped would be funded. Full details of the bids, and any awards were to be made available on the Council's website in due course.

Supplemental

Councillor Cave took the opportunity to ask the Cabinet Member if he would accept an invitation to meet her in the Rural Vale, to which the Cabinet Member indicated that he would do so if they could consider a mutually convenient date having regard to their commitments.

(iv) **Question from Councillor C.A. Cave**

The VoGC has encouraged Town and Community Councils to take on more responsibility for local matters including taking ownership of land and property previously the responsibility of the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoGC). What support can the Town and Community Councils expect from the VoGC when things go wrong? For example, recently there was an attempt by gypsy/travellers to camp on land previously the responsibility of the VoGC but now in CC ownership. Had the attempt been successful, what support would the CC have been able to access from the VoGC?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

On an annual basis the Legal Services Department wrote to each Town and Community Council in the Vale of Glamorgan providing them with a Service Level Agreement for consideration by the relevant Town and Community Council, offering the opportunity to instruct Legal Services on matters where no conflict of interest arose and subject to there being capacity to deal with the instructions.

The Leader advised that currently only one Community Council had entered into a Service Level Agreement with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Legal Services Department for 2021/22; however, a reminder of the offer had been sent to the remaining 25 Town / Community Councils.

(v) **Question from Councillor C.A. Cave**

Evidence suggests that children's mental health has been negatively impacted by prolonged absence from school and the lack of social interactions caused by several Covid 19 lockdowns. What is the VoGC doing to support pupils to look after their mental health?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration

A comprehensive report on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the social, emotional and mental health of children and young people in the Vale of Glamorgan had been presented at the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee on 8th July and had been discussed at length. In addition to the report, the Committee was live-streamed and a recording of the discussion available online.

The Cabinet Member had also recently spent a morning in discussion with the Council's Pupil Voice Network which was a topic they were concerned about. The Cabinet Member stated that she had advised the network that concerns about deterioration in the social, emotional and mental health of learners had pre-dated the pandemic, with specific work to address these concerns having been undertaken in recent years, with, for example, the development of the Directorate of Learning and Skills strategy based on Developmental Trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), Attachment theory and the neuroscience of mental health and ill-health.

The progress made in implementing the Strategy, alongside specific support provided by the Local Authority as outlined in the report presented to scrutiny, had enabled children and young people to access appropriate support in relation to social, emotional and mental health.

Supplemental

Councillor Cave enquired as to any information on how many people had taken the offer up.

The Cabinet Member agreed to look into the matter and respond accordingly.

(vi) **Question from Councillor C.A. Cave**

What is the VoGC doing to help family carers of people with physical and psychological health needs who have been isolated, because of the Covid 19 epidemic, from many of the normal support mechanisms?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health

The Vale of Glamorgan's carer services had continued to put the individual carer's needs at the heart of any assessment of support and during the periods of lockdown had adjusted the way they both assessed need and provided support to the individuals.

All carers awaiting or contacting the service had been referred to the Cardiff and Vale Carers Gateway in order to gain any information, advice and assistance (IAA) they required at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, funding had been provided by the Vale to enable the Gateway to award Emergency Grants, for COVID related needs.

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to further assure Councillor Cave that all the teams had contacted known carers to check on their wellbeing and to escalate any needs, as appropriate.

There were also several examples of how the services provided had been altered to meet need during the pandemic and the Cabinet Member advised he would be happy to provide a detailed list of initiatives for information.

Supplemental

Councillor Cave enquired as to the number who had taken up the emergency grants.

The Cabinet Member indicated that he was unable to provide the information at the meeting but would forward the information in writing to the Councillor.

(vii) **Question from Councillor C.A. Cave**

The Cabinet Member is no doubt aware of the benefit of 'Men's Sheds'. We do not have any 'Men's Sheds' in the Vale of Glamorgan and therefore people have to travel outside of the Local Authority area to access this form of psychological support. Can the Member tell us what he is doing to try and secure 'Men's Sheds' in the Vale of Glamorgan?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health

The Men's Sheds Association was a national organisation aimed at providing community spaces for men to connect, converse and create with the aim being to reduce isolation, encourage social engagement and build confidence.

The Council did support some Men's Shed club sessions via the Palmerston Education Centre on a weekly basis. There was a weekly Timber Shack session on a Friday 1 - 3pm and also a guitar group on a Friday 1 – 3pm supported by the Learning and Skills Directorate.

The Cabinet Member was also aware of a number of community groups that met the needs of males who would access support via Men's Sheds if there were more located in the Vale of Glamorgan. The community support workers, within the Mental Health Team, also supported a Men's football team as an example of some of the types of groups run by the Council.

In addition, there was third sector provision, e.g. Mind in the Vale had advised that prior to the pandemic they had a men's social group and men's guitar group. Mind in the Vale had informed the Council that they intended to resume this activity in the near future following the easing in COVID 19 restrictions.

The Council, through grant funding had also provided money to GVS to offer to community groups to support initiatives that addressed isolation, and emotional wellbeing. This has been primarily targeted at the older population.

Officers had also been in discussion with local third sector partners, who had indicated that there was interest in developing further Men's Sheds in the Vale and the Cabinet Member stated that if there were a willing partner to expand such provision being present within the Vale of Glamorgan, he would support them in whatever way he could to bring the initiative to fruition.

(viii) **Question from Councillor G. John**

Could you please tell me what action has been considered to take to reduce the queues on the Highway, for residents living in the Western Vale when travelling to Barry, especially at peak periods. The increase in vehicles has grown since the housing developments have sprung up and with another 2,000 homes expected to be built in the near future in the St. Athan area. At least another 4,000+ vehicles will add to the nightmare and with the lack of public transport available at peak times it

means the use of the car will increase, leaving long queues to Weycock Cross and beyond. With the recent decision taken at Planning to build a Business Park at Rhoose when it was reported 3,225 vehicles would use the site, the situation will be impossible.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

Any developments progressed or proposed to be progressed on land in the Vale of Glamorgan, was subject to the Council's current Local Development Plan 2011 to 2026, which sought to mitigate associated traffic issues by identifying local sustainable transport measures in line with Welsh Government policy and current good practice guidance. Developments also needed to be consistent with the Wales Transport Strategy objectives.

The development sites identified within the plan sought to tackle traffic congestion by securing improvements to active travel and public transport to encourage a change in travel choices whilst also seeking appropriate improvements to the strategic highway corridors to meet future demands. The Local Transport Plan supported proposals for the Cardiff Metro and the plan informed future regional transport planning. Full details had been provided within the Council's Local Development Plan document which was available on the Council's website.

All significant developments were required to undertake detailed Traffic Assessments and to have these carried out by independent specialist consultants. This was a comprehensive and systematic process that set out various transport issues relating to a proposed development and identified what measures would be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme in relation to all forms of travel. The Council had a specific policy of promoting and encouraging sustainable forms of transport to reduce reliance on private cars in favour of public transport, walking and cycling wherever practicable and had over several years successfully implemented several miles of shared footway / cycleway or Active Travel routes connecting key destinations throughout the Vale. In particular, the Council had created a high-quality shared footway / cycleway along the Port Road corridor through the north of Barry and Wenvoe onto Culverhouse Cross to provide safe, suitable, direct and usable infrastructure to encourage modal shift and reduce reliance / use of private car. There were plans to extend this route to Cardiff Airport and the western Vale subject to available funding.

The Cabinet Member further advised that the Member would also hopefully be fully aware and supportive of the ambitious proposals associated with the proposed South Wales Metro improvements, including Transport for Wales (TfW) improvements to rail transport over the next few years which would hopefully assist with improving public transport, providing better capacity and therefore assist in attracting people out of their private cars. The principles of the Metro improvement being that the impact of a societal overdependence on cars as a primary mode of transport could no longer continue and viable alternatives were essential to the future of the economic well-being of South Wales and the current environmental climate emergency. The Council fully supported these proposals and improvements and the Vale of Glamorgan's Local Transport Plan reinforced the Council's vision for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport to encourage reduction in single car

occupancy, securing improvements to strategic highway corridors and fully supported the Metro improvements for the Capital Region.

The Council with funding from the Welsh Government had also successfully completed the construction of a new route along the A4226, known locally as Five Mile Lane. The new road was straighter and safer than the old road improving journey times between the A48 and Barry as well as enhancing overall connectivity to the Cardiff Wales airport and enterprise zones in the Western Vale which were vital to the future economy of the area.

However, the Cabinet Member stated that if as a society it was going to seriously tackle road traffic congestion, it needed to change individual mind-sets about people using their private vehicles for journeys whether this was to work, to do shopping or wherever they may be going. It was just not an option to say anymore that my journey was too difficult, people have to make choices whether to sit in queuing traffic or consider public transport options, walking and cycling as appropriate. The proposed metro improvements, including TfW improvements to rail transport over the next few years would hopefully assist with improving public transport, providing better capacity and therefore assist in attracting people out of their private cars.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council had joined with Welsh Government and other Councils across the UK in declaring a global 'climate emergency' in response to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Given the 'climate emergency', society could not anymore always rely on creating more capacity by increasing road size or building more roads but must look to more sustainable and greener transport models which can only be achieved through a collaborative approach with national, regional and local governments as well as support from the wider community.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that Llantwit Major was also served by good public transport including a rail link and the local community was encouraged to fully use these travel options when considering how to make their journeys.

Supplemental

Councillor John enquired if the Cabinet Member would be prepared to lobby Welsh Government for a railway station at Gileston serving the community of St. Athan to assist people to get to work.

The Cabinet Member in response advised that he regularly raised the issues referred to by Councillor John with TfW however, the key issue regarding a railway station was where it should be sited, but that all options were being explored.

(ix) Question from Councillor R. Nugent-Finn

Having spoken to the YP who use the park frequently, the feedback is that the ramps feel unsafe and are in a state of disrepair. Are there any plans to repair / improve?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture

Extensive repair work was undertaken at the skate park in 2019 due to the majority of the Skate-lite boards failing. These were very expensive boards and it was noted at the time of replacement that the structure was not in ideal condition with some corrosion of the supporting frame evident. The work undertaken at that time did however prolong the availability of the facility.

Unfortunately, the skatepark was now coming towards the end of its useful life and needed significant refurbishment work. It was estimated that this would cost in the region of £150k and the Council did not currently have this funding available.

Unfortunately, the Council could not keep repairing the facility as this was no longer cost effective, therefore, if it could not find a funding solution soon for its refurbishment, the facility would need to be considered for closing on health and safety grounds. Council officers were currently working through the options and the Council was seeking to keep the facility operational for as long as it could, but it was a challenge that was becoming more and more difficult.

(x) Question from Councillor R. Nugent-Finn

Can you please provide full details of the plans and access including all funding and budgetary elements in relation to the tennis courts at Romilly Park?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Cabinet Member was aware that the Council's plans to improve the condition and to increase the use of Romilly Park Tennis Courts had attracted significant local interest advising that he was pleased to see that the Courts were held in such high regard by the community.

As detailed in the report to Cabinet in January this year, the Council had been approached by Tennis Wales and offered access to an exclusive grant scheme they had available to improve public tennis facilities. If the grant was not used by the Council, it was likely it would be offered to another Council area. Match funding for the grant was available from a saving resulting from the recent refurbishment of the floor in Barry Leisure Centre and a further grant from Sport Wales as part of their recovery initiatives.

The grant opportunity would enable a full refurbishment of the tennis courts to ensure that they remained fully operational and well maintained for the future. Tennis Wales would lease the tennis courts from the Council with the clear intention of ensuring that they were used by as many people as possible. This would include a small payment for the use of the courts at certain times that would be controlled via their electronic APP.

A number of objections had been raised in relation to the proposal to charge at certain times which would be the focus of a further Cabinet report later in the year before any scheme progressed.

Fees were currently in place for Romilly Tennis Courts, but due to their irregular use and the fact that there were no longer fixed numbers of staff based in parks, they had not been collected for some time.

The ability to book a court had advantages with customers able to see availability rather than arriving at the park and being disappointed. Tennis Wales would also ensure that all funds generated were reinvested in Tennis locally as well as being used to maintain the courts.

Free to use courts that existed across Barry included Millwood and Gladstone Park, and would continue to be free to access as would the courts at Romilly Park at certain times, as Tennis Wales very much wanted to encourage new players to the sport of tennis.

The Cabinet Member however, stated that the courts at Romilly were in a poor condition and without investment faced an uncertain future. The proposed scheme built on the Council partnership approach to Leisure provision and had already proved successful at Llantwit Major where the Town Council had entered into a very similar partnership with Tennis Wales that had safeguarded the Tennis Facilities at that location.

Should the scheme progress, the overall cost of the refurbishment of the Courts was estimated at £150,000 with Tennis Wales contributing £45,000 and Sport Wales contributing £30,000. The remainder would be funded via a saving made at Barry Leisure Centre.

Supplemental

Councillor Nugent-Finn enquired as to the booking system to be used, with the Cabinet Member advising that that would be the subject of a further report to Cabinet later in the year.

(xi) Question from Councillor R. Nugent-Finn

Pencoedre Village has 3 parks in total and Palmerston Estate has 1 near the School. All parks are used by children from the area and surrounding. They are all in a poor state of repair and in comparison to parks improvement and regeneration across the Vale, they are lacking behind. Is there any regeneration, improvement opportunities for the parks in the Cadoc ward?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

All the funds within the relevant budgets were currently committed for the current financial year and there was no Section 106 funding available in these areas. However, if there was any underspend on the play equipment budgets consideration

would be given to adding additional play equipment or benches to the Council's parks in these locations. In particular officers had recently been liaising with residents of Palmerston regarding their park facilities and a number of options had been discussed including seeking funding from the private sector.

An independent safety report had recently been undertaken of all play areas and any recommendations from that report would be actioned to ensure that all facilities continued to be safe to use. The report would also inform future plans for the refurbishment of play areas and would be used to prioritise any capital funding that may be available in future years.

The Cabinet Member advised that he would dearly wish to be in a position to refurbish all the older play areas but unfortunately there were limited funds available and huge demands with over 100 play areas and skate parks. The Council he said would continue to prioritise any funding it had on those areas with the worst equipment and facilities based on the evidence from safety inspection reports.

Supplemental

Councillor Nugent-Finn requested that the Council make efforts to make parks inclusive for disabled children.

The Cabinet Member signalled his agreement.

(xii) **Question from Councillor R. Nugent-Finn**

They currently stand within the boundary of the park and play area; they have not been in use for a considerable time. Even though they have community art and paintings on the outside, the residents are keen to know what if any plans there for them.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

There were currently no plans for the building which had been open as functioning toilets many years prior primarily to serve the children's paddling pool at the same location. The Council did not currently see a need for toilets now and as the building was not currently a major liability for the Council it was not actively seeking other uses for it or its disposal at the current time.

Supplemental

Councillor Nugent-Finn enquired if local residents had been consulted.

The Cabinet Member advised that they had not.

(xiii) **Question from Councillor R. Nugent-Finn**

Following my question at last Full Council, the steps at the Eastern Shelter at Barry Island remain un-repaired. My concerns as tabled before, are the risks attached for the public accessing the steps as the inbuilt tread is missing from a number of steps. Do we have a target date for repairs? Also, a number of the low-level lighting remains unrepaired, do we have a target date for these repairs?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The ramp leading to the Eastern Shelter had been repaired in January 2021 and reopened for public access. The Cabinet Member was aware that a number of the hard plastic inserts to the step edges were missing in the area of the Eastern Shelter and whilst this was not ideal, they did not appear to improve the level of anti-slip performance offered by the step edging and therefore was not considered to represent a significant safety issue or trip hazard at this time.

Investigations undertaken suggested that the simple replacement of the hard-plastic inserts was not a viable or practical resolution as they appeared to become detached too easily and would therefore represent a continued defect and not resolve the problem. A more permanent fix was therefore being investigated and various products being considered to ensure that any new step edging retrofitted in the future offered a robust and reliable solution to the current situation. It was hoped that a solution could be agreed and implemented later in the calendar year.

It was not possible to programme the works required to the low-level lighting prior to the start of the summer season but it was intended that these would be attended to later in the year.

(xiv) **Question from Councillor R. Nugent-Finn**

The majority of the hand washing facilities in these toilets are out of use. I have spoken with the toilet attendants and was informed that the automatic hand washing facilities have been problematic from the beginning, with various issues such as overheating and causing them to catch fire as well as a long waiting period for parts and servicing. The water in the 2 remaining facilities is also considerably hot, which is a health and safety concern.

Can you inform me of plans for repairs, safety elements and alternative arrangements for the public accessing the toilets for essential hand washing facilities as we approach the busy summer season?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Cabinet Member in replied that he was aware of the issues with the hand washing facilities at Barry Island. The type of units were excellent when fully functioning but could be problematic due to the complexity of the technology involved

in their operation. The department was also having major difficulties sourcing parts for them. There were currently 2 hand washing facilities functioning in the ladies toilets and 3 in the men's. Parts had been ordered some time ago for the machines that were not functioning correctly, and these parts were expected imminently. Once received the hand washing facilities would be repaired which was expected very soon. On one of the hand washing facilities the water came out hot but immediately cooled down and as such was currently being assessed for repair.

The facilities were regularly attended, with staff able to quickly close off machines that malfunctioned for any reason. Supplies of hand gels were also provided and these could be used to supplement hand washing with the machines or as an alternative should none of the machines be available.

Supplemental

Councillor Nugent-Finn enquired as to when the facilities would be operational.

The Cabinet Member in response advised that he too had chased this and he was hopeful that they would be operational by the end of the month.

(xv) Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson

Could the Leader update Council on the progress made on the Council Motion passed in February 2020 on the Barry Docks Incinerator and last reported through a question to Council from Councillor Collins in March 2021, with particular reference to the independent review and enforcement action?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Biomass development had been monitored since its initial construction commenced. To date, the plant was still not operational although some tests of the turbines had been undertaken. The use of formal enforcement proceedings remained under consideration particularly regarding the applicant/owner's failure to formally regularise unauthorised elements of the plant. The Council had obtained legal advice from Counsel to inform the consideration which was currently being reviewed. Counsel's Report on the Independent Review would be reported to Cabinet after the Summer Recess and the Leader advised that the Council had appointed a barrister.

Officers had written to the developers to advise that what had been built at the site did not accord with the plans approved under the relevant planning application (reference 2015/00031/OUT) and that there were matters identified which could not in the Council's view, be permitted development or regularised through the 'Non-Material Amendment' procedure. The developers had been advised that in order to seek retrospective planning permission for the development as built on site it was likely they would need to make a section 73A application (to regularise the position) which (given the change in regulations since the 2015 application) would be a

'Development of National Significance' application. This would also need to be submitted to, and determined by, the Welsh Ministers.

The developers disputed the position and had sought their own legal advice in this regard, however nothing that the Council had seen so far would dissuade it from its opinion that a fresh application was required for what had been constructed.

In late May 2021 the applicants had submitted an application but only for retrospective (Section 73A) planning permission for the erection and use of a cylindrical fire water tank, this had been previously removed by the developers but had since been re-erected without any planning consent. The Council formally advised the developer this was not considered to be a validly made application because it formed part of the development as a whole and as such should be part of a wider section 73A planning application to regularise the whole development and that this should instead be submitted to the Welsh Ministers as per Section 62D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) as a 'Development of National Significance'. The applicants refute the Council's position and refused to register the application under a new form of appeal known as a validation appeal to the Planning Inspectorate who quashed the notice of invalidity on the grounds that it was not the correct process to follow. It has now been confirmed by Welsh Government that the validation appeal process is only considered if there is enough information to register the application rather than the more detailed legal points about whether it is a development of National significance etc.

The Council would now be seeking a further view from Welsh Government regarding the submission, but given it was the view that the application for the water tank cannot be considered in a piecemeal way, separately to the consideration of the whole plant (particularly as it was now required as part of any licencing agreement with Natural Resources Wales) the application would not be registered.

Welsh Government has indicated that it will respond to the request regarding the correct way that this matter should progress once it had obtained its own further legal advice and we will await this response before proceeding further.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson asked the Leader if he would keep Members informed of progress which the Leader agreed to do.

(xvi) **Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson**

What progress has been made on the implementation of the Optimised Retrofit Programme in the Vale of Glamorgan, which aims to reduce carbon emissions and householders utility bills, and what future steps are planned for retrofitting urban Council housing properties?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services

The Cabinet Member stated that the Housing and Building Services Team had engaged a local Barry based contractor to deliver the installation of 57 hybrid heating systems within the Council's housing stock with the 16-week programme due to finish the 2nd week of November 2021.

Prior to carrying out the installation works Bridgend College had been successfully engaged to upskill in-house Council staff and the contractor's operatives to enable the retrofit works to be undertaken, with further upskilling training to be delivered after the summer break. Following the training the first two pilot properties had been confirmed as completed on 19/07/2021.

As part of Welsh Government's (WG) requirements for the grant funding the team were providing regular updates about the challenges surrounding the delivery of the retrofit project including lessons learnt in relation to communications with tenants, installation hurdles and supply chain requirements. WG had also engaged Swansea University to gather data at various stages of the project and the team were working closely with them to ensure the data was collected at the key stages.

The Team continued to work with PassivUK Ltd to develop monitoring software which would be installed into a further 100 properties within the Council housing stock. A Building Passport (which includes a PAS2035 energy survey) would be produced for each property, which would provide data to support further grant funding bids to install retrofit technology within the Council stock to reach carbon zero or as close to it as possible.

The Housing Development and Investment Team would also be undertaking PAS2035 assessments to inform the correct and financially sound retrofit solutions to be installed on the stock, the outcomes of which would feed into the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and direct investment decisions over the coming years.

(xvii) Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson

During recent months, the Council has supported road safety programmes in primarily rural areas, such as the Welsh Government initiative in St. Bride's Major and more recently announced programmes in Aberthin and Peterston-Super-Ely. While we await the new legislation for 20mph zones to be introduced, what plans does the Council have to trial 20mph zones within urban towns, such as Barry, to learn lessons regarding compliance and enforcement of speeding rules in built-up areas?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Cabinet Member advised that Welsh Government was currently consulting on the rollout of 20 mph limits across Wales, where essentially 20 was to become the new 30 with certain exceptions, with the consultation closing 1st October, 2021. As

part of that roll out Welsh Government had eight pilot areas which included rural and also urban areas. The Council was successful in obtaining a pilot for St. Brides Major and the scheme had been implemented and results including driver speed and air quality were being fed into the work being undertaken. Other areas included in the pilots included:

- Abergavenny, Monmouthshire
- Central north Cardiff
- Severnside, Monmouthshire
- Buckley, Flintshire
- Cilfriw Village, Neath and Port Talbot
- St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire
- Llanelli north, Carmarthenshire.

A report had been considered by Cabinet on 21st June, 2021 in relation to two additional areas for experimental 20 mph speed limit orders at Aberthin and Peterston-Super- Ely. The reasons for the areas that had been chosen had been detailed fully in the Cabinet report and with Welsh Government progressing the legislation apace, it was not considered prudent to consider any further areas for pilot projects at this time.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson enquired as to what reassurance the Cabinet Member could provide in respect of enforcement and compliance and whether the Cabinet Member would consider a trial to be undertaken prior to the legislation.

In response the Cabinet Member advised that he did not know what trial Councillor Dr. Johnson was asking be undertaken but that he also did not think it would be appropriate to take on any further areas. As far as enforcement was concerned, he stated that this was a matter for the Police under their powers however, he advised that it was possible things could be varied or changed in the legislation. The Cabinet Member also commented that in his view what needed to be done was to win over the hearts and minds of motorists as he was personally concerned that some of the roads being reduced to 20mph were harder to persuade the motorist to adhere to than others. All the statistics however pointed to the fact that if someone was involved in a collision at 20mph there was more than a chance of survival whereas at 30mph the statistics for survival were far worse.

(xviii) Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson

What work is the Council undertaking over the Summer holiday to support children to catch up with their learning, following interruption as a result of the Coronavirus, with particular reference to children in receipt of the Pupil Development Grant and the School Holiday Enrichment Programme?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member stated that Welsh Government had been clear that it was not supporting formal programmes during the summer holidays for catch-up learning. There were however, a number of programmes that were being run over the break to support young people of all ages.

The Cabinet Member drew Member's attention to the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP), which was a school-based education programme providing food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children in areas of social deprivation during the school summer holidays .

It was noted that in 2021 4 primary schools would be taking part in the programme over the summer, including Gladstone, Ysgol Y Ddraig, Oakfield and Cadoxton primary schools. The Council and its schools were working alongside its trading company, Big Fresh Catering, who had designed healthy and nutritious menus, ensuring the pupils get a balanced, healthy and interesting diet.

The Welsh Government had allocated the Vale of Glamorgan Council £196,000 to run the Summer of Fun Programme across the summer period to children and young people up the age of 25. Whilst the Summer of Fun was open to all children and young people, Local Authorities and partner organisations had been asked to consider how they could reach those who had experienced the greatest impacts of Covid and to provide inclusivity within this age range. The Vale had taken a dual approach, providing activities that were open to all, as well as undertaking some targeted provision for those individuals who may not be able to access mainstream provision or who would benefit from more targeted support. The programme would deliver an extensive programme with additional clubs, activities, sports, arts and play sessions and more.

This provision was in addition to what the Council's services already offered e.g. the Play and Sports teams would also be hosting their own sessions and workshops in key areas across the Vale, alongside a 3-week programme by the Youth Service, supporting the Community Safety team. The information was also available on the Council's website.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson, aware that four English medium schools engaged in the programme, enquired as to whether work could be undertaken for Welsh medium schools to engage the following year.

The Cabinet Member advised that the programme had been promoted widely and she would be delighted if a Welsh medium school engaged in 2022 subject to funding. However, there was funding available for schools to organise their own initiatives.

(xix) **Question from Councillor L.O. Rowlands**

Will the Leader please confirm how many incidents of workplace bullying have been reported by the Council employees in the past year?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Council has had one case of bullying/harassment during the last 12 months. The case was resolved in May 2021, and there are no further cases outstanding or have been received.

Supplemental

Councillor Rowlands enquired as to whether the Leader agreed that bullying of a member of staff or a Councillor was not acceptable in society and that a party losing a Member to bullying was unfortunate, but that losing two Members would be considered careless.

The Leader advised that he did not tolerate bullying, he did not believe there had been any bullying but if Councillor Rowlands considered there to be bullying in his Group, he suggested that it be addressed with his Group.

(xx) **Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson**

In December 2018, it was resolved that the Vale Council works towards becoming a formally accredited Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation and commits to paying all direct employees the Real Living Wage, as well as developing policies to ensure that the Real Living Wage is paid to indirectly employed staff. What progress has been made towards these aims?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Council had been paying staff and agency workers above the Living Wage for a number of years. The Council appreciated that it was currently paying a minimum rate of £9.43 per hour, which was 7 pence below the current living wage, however, the national pay award for local government workers had yet to be set, and was likely to take the Council above the living wage once again, which would be back dated to 1st April, 2021.

Discussions had commenced to review the Council becoming a living wage employer which would also require the Council to ensure any contractors paid the living wage. The Council was in discussions with its Procurement team to review the living wage process on how this could be included in future procurement exercises.

Further information would be provided in due course once the discussion had taken place, with a view that the Council became an accredited Living Wage Employer.

Supplemental

In response to Councillor Dr. Johnson's query as to a timescale, the Leader advised that discussions were ongoing for future procurement exercises.

309 PUBLIC QUESTIONS –

The following questions were submitted and replied to as shown, in accordance with the protocol agreed by Council on 5th May, 2010:

(i) **Question from Mr. A. Dobbinson**

How many Council owned properties in the Vale of Glamorgan have access to vehicle parking space(s) i.e. driveways etc. that require the vehicle to cross the adopted footway without the provision of a dropped kerb? What action, if any, are the Council taking to regularise this situation?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

Thank you for your question Mr. Dobbinson. To date, 34 Council properties have been identified as having crossovers without the necessary dropped kerb provision. The requirement to install properly constructed vehicle crossovers within the footway is the same for Council properties as it is for private properties.

Tenants are required to obtain permission for any alternations to their property as part of their tenancy agreement. In this case they would also be required to obtain the necessary permission from our Highways Department and would be required to pay for this application and the resulting works to create the highway crossover.

Where a tenant has specific mobility issues that could require off street parking provision, this will be assessed by the Council's Occupational Therapy Team and the works could form part of a disabled facility grant application.

As with private owner occupiers, Council Housing tenants should stop using any unauthorised vehicle crossovers if they are not in a position to progress an application. Our housing officers are available to provide support and advice to our tenants on this matter and are working with a number of tenants to help to resolve any issues they may have.

Note

I am advised that prior to re-letting a property the Council's re-lets team will remove vehicular access to gardens if these have been created illegally. This will involve closing off any accesses though boundary fences but not removing any hard standings that may have been formed.

(ii) **Question from Mrs. J. Gough**

I would like to ask if the Council will reconsider the parking fees coming into place in our local beauty spots. I frequent Porthceri, Cosmeston and Barry Island when walking my dog. I reluctantly agree that a charge of £50 annual fee to park and walk my dog daily would be acceptable. It was not clear that this fee will only cover Porthceri and Cosmeston. I feel that the charge of £100 annual parking for the Island is unfair and excessive. Please reconsider the amount to dogwalkers and local people who use all the facilities on a regular basis and the impact on local trade during the winter months.

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Thank you for your question Mrs. Gough. I would firstly state that the provision of free parking periods for local residents was very much in the front of our minds when the charging arrangements for Country Parks were determined. In addition to what we believe to be a reasonable and fair charge of £50 to access both our Country Parks for a year, the charges do not start at these locations until 10:00 a.m, a decision that was taken to assist and ensure that many of our local residents who use these sites for frequent early morning walks would not be required to pay for car parking. Also, they end in the summer period at 8:00 p.m. and at 5:00 p.m. in the winter. Funding received from parking fees at our Country Parks will be re-invested within those Country Parks, helping to secure the long term sustainability of these important attractions.

In respect to our car parks at Barry Island, the annual parking permit charge reflects the higher daily charge at this location of £6:00 per day. If this car park is used for longer than 1 hour, even once per fortnight, the £100 annual permit would pay for itself.

I would point out that you do not have to purchase the annual or 6 monthly parking permit if you are happy with the current parking arrangements when you visit Barry Island, as car parking charges are already in place at this location.

In addition, there is free on-street parking space within the Barry Island area at Friars Road.

In terms of the potential effect of the new permit charges on businesses, we would hope that this would be positive, especially for those businesses whose staff are currently using our chargeable car parks on a regular basis. We are not expecting the parking permit charges to have any negative impact on trading conditions. Visitors attend Barry Island in large numbers due to its obvious popularity, the summer parking charges are as they have been now for a number of years. The availability of a parking permit is an added option for the most frequent of car park users and rather than deterring anybody from attending Barry Island, it provides an additional and considerably cheaper option for regular and frequent visitors.

(iii) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

Considering Barry has the highest rise and fall of tide in the UK, the Council have accepted there is a global issue with plastic pollution and despite the high turnout of traders and Councillors at the Litter Summit 3 or 4 years ago, there has been little change to the visitors' actions. Although we appreciate the changes made regarding the PA system, increased bins and some new signage, when a voluntary group picks up 108 bin liners in a mostly rainy month of June, it has to be accepted it is not working. What can the Council do to encourage the visitors to remove their litter from the beach? Many suggestions were made at the Summit but none of these seem to have been implemented, and we are now approaching an environmental emergency, with the amount of rubbish that is being taken out to sea.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to thank the Beautiful Barry Group and other volunteers who assisted in keeping our beaches clean stating that the efforts were greatly appreciated and regrettably most necessary at many coastal resort areas in the UK, not just Barry Island.

The Cabinet Member recognised the challenges around beach litter and was committed to providing a safe, clean environment before and after people visit Vale beaches and in particular, Whitmore Bay, Barry Island. The issue was, in the most part, associated with the poor behaviour of a certain number of our visitors, who he stated in his view simply did not care about the local environment or the effect their actions were having on others. Clearly, an ongoing programme of education and awareness work was still required as visitors varied and the problem represented a wider issue in society.

There were 64 ideas generated at the Litter Summit in May 2018, some of which included suggested actions for traders such as banning the use of plastic bottles and polystyrene containers, and others national initiatives such as reverse vending machines for plastic bottles. A number of the ideas where the Council had responsibility had been implemented, including the introduction of gold / silver / bronze litter responses that were pre-agreed leading up to weekends / bank holidays, half terms and weather changes, where the amount of resource allocated to the resort was based on expected visitor numbers. There had also been an increase in bin provision and signage. Bulk bins and dedicated waste collection vehicles had also been arranged during busy periods. The Public Space Protection Order aimed at addressing alcohol related anti-social behaviour had been renewed, officers also prepared social media posts advising visitors of the litter arrangements and the impacts on the environment should any litter be left on the beach. For this summer there would be an increased enforcement presence and cleansing staff assigned to the shoreline at certain tide times to help to prevent litter entering the sea. The danger of litter to the land and marine environments would also feature in Council regular tannoy announcements.

Hopefully the measures would, he said, see an improvement in the behaviour of visitors during the summer season but the Council would continue to be innovative in

assessing new options for behavioural change as this had been identified as a common thread through many of the ideas suggested at the Summit.

(iv) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

With parking charges and permits in place at Holton Road, is King Square to be the new free Car Park? Although it is obviously used by some Council workers for access to Central Park, it appears to be being used as a personal staff car park for the Town Council and any delivery drivers, and now shoppers. This is unsightly at a time when the visual aspect of the town needs improving, and is dangerous as it is in constant use by the walking public, including many children going to Central Park.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

No parking charges were proposed for Holton Road or any new parking permit schemes to be introduced in the area. Charges were to be introduced in Wyndham Street Car Park in September, following Welsh Government's most recent announcement on the Covid alert levels, but parking would remain free for car park users for the first two hours.

There were drop bollards in place on Kings Square and parking would not be authorised without it being authorised by this Council. Kings Square was open in the mornings for deliveries and shut at 11 a.m. It was often however, left open by users, and the Cabinet Member had asked that this be monitored and dealt with as appropriate.

In terms of other parking availability in Barry, there was ample space in the free multi storey car park in Court Road as well as free pocket car parks in Thompson Street and Kendrick Road. There were also free limited stay spaces throughout Holton Road for visitors to the town centre.

(v) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

Why is the location recorded for parking offences but not litter fines? How can the effectiveness of enforcement be monitored without locations?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Cabinet Member advised that he was not where Mrs Ockerby had obtained the information but advised that it was incorrect. The department did hold records of where Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering were issued and the information was used to inform its patrol arrangements.

In determining patrol patterns the Council also responded to intelligence and information relating to littering and fly tipping complaints received from customers via the contact centre.

The Cabinet Member regrettably accepted that for certain individuals there must be the threat of enforcement or receipt of penalties in order for them to change their poor behaviour, 'Enforcement' being a cornerstone of the four "Es" of effective behaviour change", Education / Encourage, Engineering and Enforcement.

Whilst the effectiveness of enforcement alone was notoriously difficult to measure the department would continue to undertake enforcement based on the available intelligence as part of the overall control measures for litter and fly-tipping.

In conclusion the Cabinet Member added that a great deal of information was put out via social and other media outlets regarding the Council's activities for both parking and environmental enforcement and the Council would continue to do this.

(vi) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

Where are the drinking water fountains and when are they being installed in the parks as planned, as the money was reserved for these over 3 years ago and their installation will help in the fight against plastic pollution?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Cabinet Member was delighted to advise that at present there were 11 drinking stations installed at sites around the Vale as follows:

- Upper Gladstone Gardens, Barry
- Two fountains at Barry Island Promenade
- Two fountains at Victoria Park, Barry
- Belle Vue Park, Penarth
- New Skate Park Cogan, Penarth
- Ceri Road Changing Rooms, Rhoose
- Milburn Park Pavilion, Rhoose
- Murch Community Centre, Dinas Powys
- Toilet Block, Main Car Park, Ogmore By Sea

The Council also had plans to install another 8 drinking stations during the next 1-2 years at the following sites:

- Central Park, Barry
- Knap Gardens, Barry
- Romilly Park, Barry
- Cliff Walk, Penarth
- Penarth Seafront
- Alexandra Park, Penarth
- Celtic Way Community Centre, Rhoose
- Lougher Place, St. Athan.

There had been some delay in the progress of the implementation plans due to Covid but the Cabinet Member hoped that Mrs. Ockerby would agree that the

Council's investment in drinking water fountains over the past few years had been significant.

(vii) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

What communication has the Council had with Dwr Cymru regarding the extremely high amount of discharges into the Dock from the combined sewage outlets? With residents receiving letters concerning a future marina this must surely be a priority before any plans could be considered for leisure use.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services

The Council's Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) undertook twice yearly inspections of the designated bathing water beaches within its area, (3 of which were within Barry) with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) being the regulators for this. NRW also took water samples during the bathing water season, to ensure the water quality was of a standard that falls within the Bathing Waters Directive.

Further information could be obtained by visiting the web site for NRW.

SRS was not aware of the number of combined sewage outfalls within the docks area as this was the responsibility of NRW, neither had there been any notifications from NRW or Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to inform of any recent spills.

The site was not currently a designated bathing water site, or marina.

(viii) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

What is being done to recoup the cost of the SOSO graffiti?

Rep.ly from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Police had dealt with the matter but regrettably were unable to recoup any costs associated with the graffiti, for reasons that the Cabinet Member was unable to publicly disclose.

Advice had been provided to businesses that had been impacted by the graffiti on anti-graffiti products which may assist them should there be any future incidents and to assist in minimising damage going forward. At present this was a cost to the private businesses concerned.

Ongoing meetings between the Council's Community Safety Team, its Town Centre Management staff and the Police were taking place monthly to ensure effective communication between the respective organisations and the business community. These meetings also assisted in the early identification and intervention on environmental crime issue such as the matter referred to.

(ix) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

What is being done to enable Bird Cage walk to open up, as this walkway has been closed since 2/6/2019?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The footpath known as Birdcage Walk had been closed to the public since 22nd June, 2018 due to the unsafe nature of the adjacent retaining wall which was a Council owned structure and supported a separate private retaining structure on the land above.

The presence of both the Council and privately owned retaining structures located in the area contributed and gave rise to complex structural safety issues as well as a difficult legal position which was delaying the implementation of any remedial solutions being progressed to date.

The Council was currently liaising with relevant parties and considering its legal position to determine how best to move forward. In the meantime, the Council was monitoring the situation and managing the necessary removal of vegetation which was potentially contributing to the structural issues and would prevent future repairs being carried out.

The Cabinet Member advised that it was therefore necessary to keep Birdcage Walk closed for public safety until the issue of liability was resolved and a repair scheme, paid for from the appropriate party can be successfully determined and implemented. Regrettably, given the complex nature of the situation, it was not possible to provide a timescale to reopen Birdcage Walk at this time, but the Cabinet Member took the opportunity to assure Mrs. Ockerby that the Council's professional officers were giving the matter their full attention, with the intention of best protecting the public purse and re-opening the route as soon as possible.

(x) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

With the Old Harbour continuing to be polluted by the blue boat that is also damaging the Harbour Wall, when are the Council going to remove the two boats and what will be done to recoup the cost of this from the owner?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Council had sought advice from relevant external agencies and even though the boat posed a low pollution threat, the situation was clearly unacceptable. The boats entered the Harbour without permission from the Council and had remained without permission, despite the owners being instructed that the boats should be removed.

The removal of the boats was a complex process but the Council was working to have them removed as soon as possible. Legal proceedings had commenced and therefore the Cabinet Member was limited in how much further information he could

disclose as he clearly did not wish to prejudice any proceedings. However, he advised that he could reassure Mrs. Ockerby that it was a matter of high priority.

(xi) **Question from Mr. M. Lock**

An FOI request reveals that the Council spent close to £20,000 on repairs to the skatepark at the Knap. Was this good value seeing as the park is still in very poor condition and full of unsafe wooden patches and holes?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture

The Cabinet Member advised that work referred to the question had been carried out in 2019. The work had been required due to the majority of the Skate-lite boards failing. These were very expensive boards and it was noted at the time of replacement that the structure was not in ideal condition with corrosion of the supporting frame evident. The work undertaken at that time did however prolong the availability of the facility.

Unfortunately, the skatepark was now coming towards the end of its useful life and there was strong interest from certain members of the skating community to having the facility renovated. It was estimated that this would cost in the region of £150k and the Council did not currently have the funding available.

Unfortunately, the Council was unable to keep repairing the facility as it was no longer cost effective, therefore, if a funding solution could not be found soon for its refurbishment, consideration would need to be given to consider closing the facility on health and safety grounds. Officers were currently working though the options with the intention to obviously seek to keep the facility operational for as long as possible but that this was a challenge that was becoming more and more difficult.

(xii) **Question from Mr. M. Lock**

On behalf of Beautiful Barry, we have requested previously a permanent public representative on Scrutiny meetings. Would the Council allow and welcome this and could a local Citizens Forum be established to facilitate such a thing?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Leader stated in response that he assumed that Mr Lock was referring in his question to his question submitted to the Council meeting on 29th July, 2019.

The question at that time on behalf of Beautiful Barry referred to the Council making improvements by not just the livestreaming of Full Council and Planning Meetings but also each of the Scrutiny Meetings and Cabinet Meetings in the interests of public engagement.

The Leader stated that he could confirm that the Council had since May 2021 livestreamed the meetings Mr. Lock had previously referred to and would continue to broadcast the majority of its meetings in the future, well in advance of new Regulations to be enabled in May of 2022 as a result of the introduction of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

In regard to Scrutiny Committees, members of the public and individuals representing groups were already able to submit a request to speak at a Scrutiny Committee (and indeed Planning Committee on planning applications, this process has also been in place since meetings of the Council resumed on a virtual basis as a result of the pandemic) and make representations on matters under consideration by the Council and would invite Beautiful Barry to take up this opportunity and facility to engage with the Council on matters of mutual interest. The Council engaged with many Forums as part of its overall public engagement strategy and would continue to do so however, there were many Forums that existed and therefore, it would not be practical to have all these groups sitting formerly on the Scrutiny Committees. That was why the Leader explained the above arrangements were in place.

Scrutiny Committees were able and would continue to be able to invite individuals and representatives of Forums and groups to give evidence on issues where the Committees consider it appropriate to do so.

The Leader also took the opportunity to point out that Elected Members of the Council in their elected local constituency role, were also able to raise matters of concern on behalf of their communities which was another avenue open to all.

For information the Council had also recently made changes in how it raised public awareness about future Council meetings, including Scrutiny Committees and matters that would be considered such details of upcoming meetings and items that may be of interest being provided via social media twitter feeds.

The Leader in conclusion also thanked the Beautiful Barry Group for promoting Council meetings on its Facebook page.

(xiii) **Question from Mrs. C. Ockerby (On behalf of Beautiful Barry)**

With traffic to Barry Island regularly at a standstill during the summer, restricting residents from reaching their homes and going shopping, is it possible a Park and Ride facility could be implemented using the Civic Offices, Docks Offices and Memorial Hall car parks for visitors at the weekends to help reduce congestion all over Barry, and stop visitors parking illegally when they reach the Island, because the car parks are full?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

It had been recognised there would inevitably be an increase in traffic volumes along Ffordd y Mileniwm as a consequence of the ongoing Waterfront development as well as the requirement for visitor access to the popular Barry Island resort, during the

summer and this had been no different to other major seaside resorts throughout Wales.

The Cabinet Member in his response advised that the Council had previously worked proactively with the Waterfront Consortium to ensure that a second access to Barry Island resort had been constructed. This new link road had proven to be of a significant benefit to both residents and businesses alike and the availability of two access roads onto Barry Island had vastly improved access in the peak Summer season and reduced the road congestion previously experienced.

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to clarify that traffic studies had been carried out for the Waterfront Development and new link road at planning stage prior to planning permission being granted and as well as the new road serving both the development and Barry island with the increased traffic capacity that this provided. The Council also ensured that there were good quality active travel routes provided as part of the overall Waterfront development to reduce reliance on private car and in so doing reduce traffic congestion and CO2 emissions.

The Cabinet Member stated that he would encourage residents and visitors throughout the Vale to consider alternate modes of transport to the private car wherever practicable, especially for short journeys, however, he recognised that many would still find it more convenient to travel by car especially if travelling as a family.

The focus for the Council and likewise Welsh Government was to encourage active travel and use of public transport, in order to reduce reliance on the private car and address traffic issues and congestion generally wherever this is practicable. The provisions for active travel at the Waterfront and Barry Island were already significant and in place providing good alternatives to private car, especially for more local journeys.

The Cabinet Member suggested that a Park and Ride operating from the Civic Offices, Docks Offices and Memorial Hall would require a dedicated Park and Ride bus service along a corridor where there was already a rail service that served Barry island.

The Council had previously provided temporary signage from the Barry Docks Link Road to the Council's Docks Office in Barry advising of park and ride facilities so as to encourage visitors to park and use the train service instead of driving onto Barry Island itself and this arrangement would be reinstated to assist with addressing the concerns raised and providing visitors with appropriate options.

With traffic to Barry Island regularly at a standstill during the summer, restricting residents from reaching their homes and going shopping, question whether it would be possible if a Park and Ride facility could be implemented using the Civic Offices, Docks Offices and Memorial Hall car parks for visitors at the weekends to help reduce congestion all over Barry, and stop visitors parking illegally when they reach the Island, because the car parks were full?

The car parks at the Council's Docks Office remained available to the public who wished to use the Docks station and would also be available to any member of the public who wished to park there to access the Island on foot or by bus or rail.

This he stated was the same in respect of the Civic Offices in respect of evenings and weekends he believed.

(xiv) **Question from Mr. M. Lock**

A recent survey on Beautiful Barry showed that 18.2% of over 700 responses wanted a cinema or bowling entertainment complex which was once marketed as coming to the waterfront. How has this idea been encouraged by the Council to any potential leisure developers?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration

In 2012 the former owners of the funfair site on Barry Island submitted and gained approval (subject to a legal agreement) for the redevelopment of Barry Island Pleasure Park with a mixed-use development that included a cinema and leisure complex but the developer did not implement that permission and subsequently sold the site to the current funfair operator and the consent had expired. It was understood that at the time the development was not commercially viable, and no operator could be found to take the proposals forward.

Similarly, in 2015 the Council marketed a site within the innovation quarter of the waterfront for leisure purposes and did receive a bid from an operator to develop a cinema and other associated drive through restaurants on the site. However, the proposed developer failed to attract an operator and eventually withdrew their bid for the site.

It had been made clear to the Council both by developers and cinema operators that the Cinema industry was struggling before the pandemic and that the commercial viability of cinema and leisure development was marginal at best. It was also clear that Barry suffered somewhat given its proximity to Cardiff and the significant offer that was available just 15-20 mins away.

However, since the pandemic, Cinemas had to close from 23rd March, 2020 because of the nationwide lockdown, they had opened briefly again in the summer of 2020 and closed again until recently. Revenue was expected to plunge in the current year. The closure of cinemas during the lockdown periods, combined with a lack of new films and low consumer confidence, it was expected that admissions would plummet. Data from the UK Cinema Association shows that admissions were just 5.5 million over the three months through September 2020, compared with 45.2 million the year before, representing an 87.8% decline.

All the major cinema groups were currently in a perilous position, dealing with both the effects of the pandemic and the growth of the digital movie provider and against this back drop it was not realistic to expect that in the short term a cinema provider could be attracted to open new premises in the town.

Nevertheless, the Cabinet Member advised that the Council remained supportive of the possibility of bringing leisure uses to Barry. Policies in the Local Development Plan remained supportive of leisure developments on the island and waterfront as well as in the town centre and the Council would happily work with any proposed operator who wanted to bring a cinema to Barry. However, these were commercial market-led investment decisions he commented that were largely outside the Council's control.

(xv) **Question from Mr. M. Lock**

The pool slide at Barry Leisure centre was once a main attraction and is now a derelict eyesore. Could the Council explain why it's not been maintained and could it be reopened?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture

Unfortunately, despite regular maintenance at the time, the Hydroslide at Barry Leisure Centre developed a number of faults due to its age, and was deemed beyond repair and was due to be removed in the next few weeks. A large pool inflatable, taking the form of an obstacle course, was purchased as a replacement for the Hydroslide and proved extremely popular with visitors to Barry Leisure Centre. Sadly, at present the pool inflatable was not being used due to the wider operational issues associated with complying with the current COVID regulations, especially the additional cleaning requirements necessary throughout the Centre. These 'inflatable sessions' would however be reinstated as soon as possible.

The area where the Hydroslide was located was being repurposed as a new outdoor fitness area to assist in the recovery from the effects of Covid-19 on the Leisure Centre. It was hoped that this repurposed area would attract new customers as well as providing an attractive new fitness zone to existing customers

(xvi) **Question from Mr. M. Lock**

June was Pride month and with most events of gatherings unable to take place due to Covid, has the Vale supported this in other productive ways such as online events?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Council was committed to the equality agenda and Pride month was always an opportunity the Council took to celebrate the LGBT community.

Due to the fact in-person events were not able to take place in the year the Council had undertaken a range of other activities, including:

- The rainbow flag being flown at the Civic Offices during the month;
- Social media was used to support Pride month, including a 'Happy Pride Month' [tweet](#), the use of the Council's rainbow logo version on Twitter and Facebook and retweeting social media posts from Pride Cymru.

Throughout the month the shelters at Barry Island and tunnel at Hood Road displayed the rainbow flag lighting schemes as the default setting and on some days with this being changed to mark other occasions.

The Council celebrated the diversity of its workforce and Pride month was an opportunity to further do this. There was a reference in the Managing Director's weekly message at the beginning of the month, for example and the Council's LGBT staff network, GLAM, had published a guide on celebrating Pride 2021. This was emailed to all GLAM members before also being published as a news item on the intranet and again promoted by the Managing Director.

The Leader stated that he was pleased, too, to see the Council's Big Fresh Café celebrating Pride month with the sale of a rainbow cake at Penarth Pier Pavilion (and he had heard it was delicious, too).

The Council was committed to diversity in its communities, being representative of the community it served and despite the restrictions, embraced Pride month again in 2021. The Leader was hopeful of the return to in-person events on issues such as Pride, the Windrush celebration day and others in the not too distant future.

(xvii) **Question from Mr. S. Burnell**

How many complaints were received by the Council in regards to the lack of space from A boards and tables and chairs?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

Keeping footways as clear as possible for pedestrians and those partially sighted was essential for active travel and safety. By doing this the Cabinet Member stated the Vale of Glamorgan was a more attractive and vibrant place to visit. The footways were a public asset and as such should be managed for the greater public interest not just used for the few who wish to place items on it for their benefit.

The Cabinet Member did not have an exact number of complaints received and a timescale or specific location had not been provided in the question. However, the Cabinet Member could advise that the Council regularly received complaints for highway obstructions such as plant pots, advertising boards and equipment used by businesses. As an example, in the last 15 months at Penarth Esplanade alone it had been receiving at least one issue per week, likewise for the residents in the apartment blocks in this location, who regularly contacted the Council regarding obstructions of the highway and footway.

In 2020 at Barry Island, one business expanded to cover a significant area of the footway, such that pedestrians had to step into the road to pass by. Also, the

drinking of alcohol across uncontrolled areas of the footway could be intimidating, especially to families with young children and 10 individual complaints regarding this had been received.

The number of complaints and officer time dedicated to dealing with these issues was significant and proper control of items on the highway improved highway safety, created more welcoming spaces and also reduced the risk of complaints. Payment for this provision from the businesses concerns also avoided such costs being picked up by the Council Taxpayers.

(xviii) **Question from Miss. A. Greenfield**

How has the Council considered the environmental impact of requiring businesses to replace pavement signage with approved designs? Could these changes be phased in to apply to new signage only to allow serviceable items to be used until they require replacement? This reducing the environmental impact.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Council encouraged the provision of equipment on the public highway asset, as if it was of an appropriate design and placed in the right location it could make a positive contribution by adding vitality, colour, life and interest to the street scene. Such items could also help maximise the use of public spaces, aid the local economy and add to the facilities offered to people who visit, live, and work in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Council had considered the environmental impact of the permitted types of advertising boards and it was important that they were properly administered and managed to ensure that they met the high standards expected in the Vale of Glamorgan to keep the areas safe, attractive and vibrant.

Many advertising boards used by businesses were oversized and, in some cases,, home-made, therefore they were not suitably weighted to prevent them from being blown over in windy conditions, resulting in the potential to cause injury or harm to visitors to the location. It was therefore important that businesses used the permitted type and sizes of advertising boards so that they did not unacceptably obstruct the footway or create a hazard for pedestrians, especially for the blind, partially sighted and other footway users who may be less able.

In discussions recently with traders, some businesses had raised the issue that their signs were of the non-permitted type as the sign plate swings in the wind, therefore it had been agreed that the sign plate could be secured with cable / zip ties to the frame to prevent the sign plate swinging as the remainder of the existing advertising board did meet the permitted type . A few of the businesses that had raised the issue had been very grateful for the recommendation by our officers and if traders did need advice in complying with the Council's new Policy officers would be more than happy to oblige.

(xix) **Question from Mr. R. Watkins**

Why does the Vale of Glamorgan Council think this is the right time to introduce charges for Tables, Chairs and A Boards to already struggling businesses while Welsh Government are still supporting these businesses through business rate relief and additional grants?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport

The Council supported the use of private business equipment on the adopted highway and as such had offered 12 months free licences to many businesses that contacted the Council to help them through the pandemic. The Council continued to support these businesses, however if a business in the Vale of Glamorgan chose to extend their business outside onto the adopted asset then this needed to be administered to ensure control, compliance and that it did not adversely affect visitors and residents using the many facilities the Vale had to offer in its towns and coastal areas. It should be noted that there was a cost to this he said which should not be borne by the Vale domestic Council Taxpayer.

The charges that had been introduced were very reasonable when compared with other Councils in Wales, Cardiff, Bridgend, and Newport Councils all levy similar charges. Some of these Councils, although they had free periods during the height of the pandemic, were all charging currently.

Unlike many other Councils the Vale offered a direct debit option for businesses in recognition of their potential cash flow issues.