

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b><u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u></b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b><u>ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022</u></b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b><u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u></b>

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PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HOLT (THE CHAIR,  
PRESIDING)

Councillors P. Baldwin  
D. Bevan  
J. Collins  
M. Cook  
M. Cross  
N. Daniels  
D. Davies  
G. A. Davies  
G. L. Davies  
M. Day  
P. Edwards  
L. Elias  
D. Hancock  
K. Hayden  
S. Healy  
J. Hill  
W. Hodgins  
J. Mason  
H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)  
C. Meredith  
J. Millard  
M. Moore  
J. C. Morgan  
J. P. Morgan  
L. Parsons  
G. Paulsen  
K. Pritchard  
K. Rowson  
T. Sharrem

T. Smith  
 B. Summers  
 G. Thomas  
 S. Thomas  
 H. Trollope  
 J. Wilkins  
 D. Wilkshire  
 B. Willis  
 L. Winnett

AND: Managing Director  
 Corporate Director of Social Services  
 Corporate Director of Education  
 Chief Officer Resources  
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer  
 Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance  
 Head of Organisational Development  
 Head of Community Services  
 Head of Regeneration  
 Head of Governance and Partnerships  
 Service Manager – Accountancy  
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic  
 Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health  
 & Safety  
 Data Protection & Governance Officer  
 Press & Publicity Officer

<u>No.</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. Holland.</p>	

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

The following declarations of interest were reported:

#### **Item No. 19: Revenue Budget 2022/2023**

- Councillors Malcolm Cross, Lyn Elias, John Hill, Wayne Hodgins, Haydn Trollope, Thomas Smith and Bernard Willis

The above-named Members remained in the meeting whilst this item of business was considered.

#### **Item No. 20: Corporate Fees and Charges 2022/2023**

- Councillors Stewart Healy and Wayne Hodgins

The above-named Members remained in the meeting whilst this item of business was considered.

#### **Item No. 24: Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023**

- Michelle Morris – Managing Director
- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Lynn Phillips – Corporate Director of Education
- Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources
- Bernadette Elias – Interim Chief Officer Commercial
- Andrea Jones – Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
- Andrea Prosser – Head of Organisational Development
- Clive Rogers – Head of Community Services
- Ellie Fry – Head of Regeneration
- Sarah King – Head of Governance & Partnerships
- Gina Taylor – Service Manager Accountancy
- Gemma Wasley – Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
- Richard Bridge - Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety
- Steve Berry – Data Protection & Governance Officer
- Louise Bishop – Press & Publicity Officer
- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer
- Leeann Turner – Democratic & Committee Support Officer

The Managing Director confirmed that following advice received from the Monitoring Officer, whilst above-named officers had declared an interest in respect of the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 they would be permitted to remain in the meeting. However, should debate ensue those officers who had declared an interest would leave the meeting at the appropriate juncture with the exception of:

- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer (minute clerk)

**Item No. 28: Shortlisting – Interim Chief Executive**

- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Commercial & Customer

**Item No. 30: Appointments Committee – Interim Chief Executive**

- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Commercial & Customer

Following advice received from the Monitoring Officer, the above-named officers were able to remain in the meeting whilst Item Nos. 28 and 30 were considered.

**4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Ukrainian/Russian Conflict:**

The Leader of the Council referred to the current horrendous situation in the Ukraine as the unprovoked invasion of country continued to escalate, as did the appalling dire humanitarian crisis, which had resulted in the displacement of almost a million people in the first seven days and now two million refugees had fled Ukraine after two weeks and this exodus was unfortunately, anticipated to continue as long as the war persisted.

He continued by stating that everyone's thoughts were with all those affected by this situation and last week the General Office building had been lit up in the colours of the Ukrainian national flag to show the County Borough's solidarity with its people.

The Leader advised that it was difficult at this stage to predict exactly what may or may not unfold over the coming period and how this may impact on the country and indeed communities. In the days and weeks ahead, people would have concerns about the impact of this war in Ukraine and at home and said that the Council would do all it could to gather and provide information and support to residents.

As part of the public service response, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) had met with Welsh Government to explore options to ensure support could be provided in Wales when Ukrainian citizens began to arrive. Further to this, the Leader of the WLGA had written to the Prime Minister and Home Secretary on behalf of the 22 Welsh local authorities expressing concern that amongst other things the U.K. refugee resettlement process was too complex, narrow and restrictive unlike the U.K.'s European neighbours who had moved at speed and had streamlined processes and relaxed rules. The Leader of the WLGA had, therefore, requested that U.K. Government reconsider the current position and further updates would be provided in due course when more of the details were established.

Councillor John Mason had convened a meeting, as Chair, of the Resettlement Working Group on 14<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the latest position with regards to the possible resettlement of vulnerable people from Ukraine and local arrangements, at which he was certain that suggestions around further necessary preparations would be discussed at the meeting and he hoped by that time further information would have been received from the WLGA. In addition, the Council would continue to work closely with key agencies at a national, regional, and local level to keep matters under close review to ensure it could respond as best it could to any implications arising for the local communities.

The Leader continued by advising that there had been huge generosity from the Welsh public and indeed people and organisations within its own communities and he offered sincere thanks on behalf of Council to each and every person who had made a contribution thus far. People had been eager to donate and support the people of Ukraine, however, donations of physical goods presented logistical difficulties both here and abroad and, therefore, people were urged who wanted to donate – and were able to – to make a financial donation to the Disaster Emergency Committee's appeal and the Council had issued a statement providing this message and relevant details last week.

The Welsh Government had also confirmed it was providing £4m in humanitarian aid to Ukraine, donated to the Disaster Emergency Committee, which represented 15 major aid charities. Allocating the funding in this way would ensure it reached those who needed it as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Work was also being undertaken with other public bodies in Wales to identify and take action on any investments held associated with the Russian state. In terms of Blaenau Gwent's exposure, the Council had no direct investments with Russian businesses or financial institutions since they would not currently meet the risk averse strategy of investing in high credit rating counterparties.

With regard to the Greater Gwent Pension Fund exposure, on a fund basis (based on January 2022 valuations) there was exposure of circa 0.19% or £7.14m to the Russian Market. The Wales Pension Partnership had issued a strong statement of intent to divest the Fund of these investments as soon as practically possible.

At this juncture, Members and officers in an act of solidarity with Ukraine and for all those involved in this terrible tragedy on both sides of the conflict paid their respects with a minute's silence.

### **Congratulations:**

Congratulations were expressed to:

- Mr & Mrs Annett of Waunlwyd who had celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on 1<sup>st</sup> March.

A letter of congratulations had been sent.

- Councillor Clive Meredith who had donated his 100<sup>th</sup> pint of blood to the Welsh Blood Transfusion Service.

### **Chair's Appeal – Blaenau Gwent Foodbank:**

The Chair expressed her appreciation to Members who have donated to the Blaenau Gwent Foodbank appeal. To date over £770 had been raised to support this organisation which had played a vital borough wide role supporting the vulnerable through the course of the pandemic and continued to do so.

**5. – MINUTE BOOK – NOVEMBER 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022**

**15.**

The Minute Book for the period November 2021 – February 2022 was submitted for consideration.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and confirmed as a true record of proceedings.

**16. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**Question No. 1**

The following question was received from Councillor Phil Edwards, Leader of the Minority Independent Group and was responded to by Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council:

**Question:**

Following the revelation in a recent meeting that CCTV cameras would be installed in the Arcade in Abertillery. Would the Leader explain where the funding came from and who decided to site them there?

**Response:**

The CCTV camera in Abertillery Arcade was a replacement for a long standing now obsolete camera that was installed due to high levels of anti-social behaviour experienced in that area in the Arcade a considerable number of years. Unfortunately, now due to the continuation of anti-social behaviour in this confined area and following a data protection impact assessment, the decision process taken by officers had been based on strong information and intelligence received by the local police, the community and information and complaints received from residents together with local Abertillery Members. This had brought the appropriate Council officers to determine and conclude that in the interests and principle of the CCTV camera arrangements, that a replacement was required and funding for this camera had been met from within the existing CCTV revenue budget.

**Supplementary Question:**

There were private properties located in the Arcade (which the Council seemed to be supplementing) and the gates on the Arcade were locked each evening and the Member, therefore, asked how anti-social behaviour could be persisting in this area.

**Response:**

Abertillery Arcade was the Council's responsibility and the Council had a duty to clean and maintain it and there was a small budget available for that purpose. Whilst the Leader was unable to divulge the details of how anti-social behaviour was persisting even though the gates were secured nightly by officers, he gave an assurance that this was fully supported by the police because it would enable them to identify the perpetrators and take appropriate action. This course of action would also protect Council property.

**Question No. 2**

The following question was received from Councillor Hedley McCarthy, and was responded to by Councillor Dai Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development:

**Question:**

Given recent adverse press reports about Trinity Chapel, which still stands idle and empty after six years. Would the Executive Member for Regeneration explain to Council why the project was at an impasse and why we were no nearer completing than we were at the start of this term in 2017?

**Response:**

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development commenced by stating that he regretted that the completion of Trinity Chapel had not been achieved during his time as Executive Member.

He referred to the first part of the question which stated that 'Trinity Chapel had stood idle and empty for six years' and pointed out that the building had been acquired by the local authority in 2009/2010, so, therefore, it had been idle and empty for many years prior to 2017. During 2015 there had been investment of £1.2m spent on the project



and at that time this had not included an internal refit and reiterated that the building had been left in this condition for a considerable period of time.

In 2017 ways of continually funding the project had been investigated and at that time discussions were entered into with a third party who was prepared to invest a significant amount of funding to complete the building. Part of this agreement was a CAT transfer of the asset to a third party at some point in the future.

In order to allow the project to progress, plans for the use of the building were designed in conjunction with the third party and a tender process undertaken to complete the internal refit. This process had taken much longer than predicated as a significant amount of due diligence had to be undertaken at that time, which was critical due to the amount of previous funding that had already been spent on the building.

Soon after the pandemic struck the community, U.K. and world and priorities had to change to address the emergency response. During this time the Trinity Chapel project and work on the building was held in abeyance for in excess of 18 months due to the lockdown. In addition, during the pandemic building costs had spiralled in these 2 years, therefore, when the lockdown was lifted and discussions resumed with the third party, the project costs had increased significantly. As a result, third party had asked for a retendering exercise which was undertaken and a grant application for funding submitted to Welsh Government to complete the project. This funding application had been successful and funding had been provided which could be used as match funding to complete the project.

The Executive Member continued by stating that he would, therefore, argue against the fact that no work had been done - a considerable amount had been done in the time available, however, the delays which had been faced had been significant. The Executive Member referred to a press article which had made comments about the amount of money that had been spent on Trinity Chapel and that had commented that the project in hindsight should have been dealt with differently and pointed out that press article referred to the time prior to 2017.

The Executive Member concluded by providing an assurance that the Council would be prudent in terms of any further expenditure that would be used on the project and he was still hopeful that Trinity Chapel would be able to be completed at some point in the future.

**Supplementary Question:**

The Member said that if completed, Trinity Chapel could have been used as a resource during the pandemic and pointed out that Abertillery had no banking facilities. He asked whether the Executive Member and Leader take responsibility for this fiasco?

**Response:**

The Executive Member said that he would certainly take responsibility that he had wanted the project completed but pointed out that plans for the building dated back to 2013 before he had been involved and these plans included a number of schemes for Abertillery including the Trinity Chapel project, which the then Leader had endorsed at that time.

He pointed out that one such proposal related to the location of the current library which was not fit for purpose and proposed that it be relocated to the town centre to increase footfall. The Executive Member acknowledged the issue regarding the banking arrangements and said that working in conjunction with the third party he hoped that once the work on the building had been completed, banking services would be available within the town.

**17. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

**18. CENSURE MOTION**

The Chair commenced by reminding Council that this was a Censure Motion and not a vote of no confidence as reported in the press and invited the Leader of the Labour Group to present the Censure Motion at this juncture.

The Leader of the Labour Group commenced by stating that this was a technical issue and the Motion needed debating. Given the statement made by the Chair, he asked the Monitoring Officer to confirm whether this was correct because his understanding was that the Motion needed to be signed by at least 7 Members which included Members from at

least two political groups to be valid and, therefore, did not require the support of two-thirds of Council.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised that the Council's Constitution did not make reference to a 'vote of no confidence'. There was, however, reference to a Motion to remove the Leader of the Council which may have been construed as a vote of no confidence and in order to achieve the removal of the Leader, the Constitution stipulated that two-thirds of the Members present must support the Motion. This Motion had been defined as a 'Censure Motion' and said that in her opinion as the Monitoring Officer, this was the appropriate label for this Motion.

The Leader of the Labour Group said that motions of no confidence were common place across the country and they could take place and were allowed to be considered. These motions were not required to meet the two-thirds threshold for removal of the Leader, so in essence this was a motion of no confidence and a motion to debate. The Leader of the Labour Group continued by presenting the Censure Motion as follows:

The recent Council meeting of 7th February 2022 dealt with the long-awaited report by Audit Wales into, 'Deficiencies in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's governance and oversight of Silent Valley Waste Services.'

When questioned on 7th February, the Managing Director, Michelle Morris, revealed that Councillor Daniels had been a recipient of the original whistleblowing letter where the officer was named and other parties who had received this letter included the Lead officer, Trade Unions and Deputy Leader.

The officer named in the report was working for the Council and this meant that on 22nd March 2018, Councillor Daniels had known that the recipient of the proposed flexible retirement was amongst those being investigated by both Gwent Police and Audit Wales for seven months before that meeting took place. Councillor Daniels had deliberately withheld this information from his Council colleagues, who were completely ignorant of those involved in the investigation. 34 Members had been present at this meeting, 32 of whom had no idea that this officer was involved in the on-going investigations. The Leader of the Labour Group believed that if Members had been made aware of this

information, he felt that this unsafe report would not have been supported.

For the reasons outlined above the Members who had signed the Censure Motion had no confidence in the Council Leader, Councillor Nigel Daniels.

The Leader of the Council commenced by stating he would respond by way of a statement but said the one question that no-one had ever asked him was did he or had he had sight of the whistle-blower's correspondence complaint and the answer was that no he didn't and no had not been sighted on this letter. The fact that he recently learned that his name was included on a copy circulation list was not proof that he had received a copy of the letter.

He, thereupon, provided the following response to the Censure Motion by outlining the chronological facts:

Council had received the whistle-blower's correspondence in August 2017 which had made a number of unsubstantiated allegations against 13 former and serving officers of the Council. It was only when Audit Wales informed Council that he was aware that 13 officers were originally under investigation. The correspondence had been dealt with properly under the appropriate procedure and referred to Audit Wales for investigation in 2017. Importantly the whistleblowing procedure provided confidentiality and anonymity for any complainant and therefore, any sharing of the letter or information included in that letter would breach that confidentiality and the Whistleblowing Policy. Even if he had had sight of the complaint and clearly if any officer or Member had shared it, they would have breached that confidentiality and the Council's Code of Conduct for both Members and officers. Therefore, to give the benefit of doubt to the officer who had been the primary recipient of the complaint that may have been the reason why the Leader had probably had not been provided with a copy that was intended for him.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that he had been briefed about the complaint by a senior officer without any names or details being shared with him but he had been told to keep it confidential and not discuss or share the fact that any such complaint had been received and when he had asked about the detail, he had been told it was not appropriate for that information to be shared with him due to the very nature of the whistleblowing procedure. Therefore, the accusations contained in the

Motion and in the press release accusing him of hiding details of the police inquiry from Councillors was absolutely wrong. In addition, for accuracy the Managing Director had been quoted in the Motion and press release that as stating he had been the recipient of the whistleblowing complaint, in actual fact the Managing Director had only confirmed that his name was on the copy circulation and being shown as copied into correspondence and this was far from proof of actually receiving that correspondence.

With regard to the Senior Management Review, the outcome of the review had recommended that the officer in question be granted flexible retirement and this had been dealt with correctly under the Flexible Retirement Policy and the officer had moved to a more junior position in the finance service as allowed under the policy. The Leader said that the Managing Director or Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance may wish to confirm at some point, the fact that there would have been no justification for not granting flexible retirement for that officer who at the time was subject to allegations that were unsubstantiated and unfounded and it was not until the draft Audit Wales report was received in November 2021 that the seriousness of the allegations against the officer were confirmed. The Leader stressed at that point in time he still had no knowledge of who was named in that report, who the complaints had been directed at or what the nature of the complaints were. He also stated that only 6 out of the 13 officers named in the original letter were named and criticised in the final Audit Wales report.

With regard to the police investigation, Audit Wales had referred the whistle-blowing complaint to Gwent Police in January 2018 and Gwent Police had only confirmed they would investigate this complaint in July 2018, some 4 months after the Senior Management Review had been agreed by Council and during that time of the review, the officer in question had not been under police investigation. The Leader advised that he was now given to understand that mindful in July 2018 there were 2 current officers were under police investigation, the Managing Director had taken external legal advice to ascertain whether the officers who were part of that police investigation could remain in work or whether suspension should be considered. This legal advice had confirmed that suspension was not appropriate simply because an investigation was underway and no action should be undertaken by the Council which could be seen to pre-empt the outcome of any investigation and for this reason both officers remained in work during the police investigation. The Leader stated that again perhaps the Managing Director may wish to confirm this that the advice was clear

and that consideration of formal action should only be considered once the outcome of the Gwent Police and Audit Wales investigations were known. In September 2019 Gwent Police confirmed they would be closing the investigation and that no action would be taken against any former or serving officers.

Audit Wales published its report on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 and this was accepted on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 by Council at which it was also agreed that an internal investigation should take place with further legal advice being sought to confirm the scope of this investigation. The Leader of the Council said he hoped that this explanation provided a factual account of events and more importantly demonstrated that he had not deliberately or otherwise withheld information from Council or Members.

The Leader continued by briefly addressing the accusations made regarding lack of transparency, inclusion, respect and deliberately withholding information. He said that the vast majority of people who knew him be it politically, professionally or a member of the public knew that these were traits that were alien to him and completely opposite to what he was about and he certainly would not have withheld any information that could have willingly been shared with Council if he had been aware of it. Subject to confirmation from the Managing Director and Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance he clarified the following:

- The Leader had never been sighted on the whistleblowing correspondence and even if he had been sighted then the Whistleblowing Policy and the Members Code of Conduct would have prevented him from disclosing any details pertinent to the issue.
- The Managing Director had only stated the Leader had been on the copy circulation and had not said he was a recipient of that correspondence.
- There was no justification not to grant flexible retirement in accordance with Council policy to the officer in question.
- The Gwent Police investigation did commence in July 2018, 4 months after the Senior Management Review had been considered and agreed and legal external advice had been sought which, clearly confirmed that formal action should not be

pursued against the officers until the outcome of the Audit Wales work and police investigation were known.

- Gwent Police closed their investigations in September 2019 with no further action being taken.
- Council agreed the Audit Wales report in February 2022 and also agreed that an internal investigation should take place following further legal advice being sought to scope out the investigation.

The Leader of the Council concluded by stating that he had attempted to keep the response measured as possible to address what he considered an unnecessary and unwarranted motion.

The Leader of the Labour Group pointed out that not only the Leader was on the circulation of the original whistleblowing letter but also had been included on the circulation of the response. He pointed out that the formal police investigation had commenced in July 2018 but a prior investigation had taken place in August 2017 before the police confirmed that a formal investigation would take place. He could not accept that the Leader had not had sight of this correspondence and said that surely in the discussions between the Leader and Chief Executive that the fact that these officers had been involved in serious allegations would have been mentioned. He concluded by stating that this on-going investigation had prevented the Council's accounts being published for a number of years.

At this juncture, the Managing Director confirmed the following points of factual accuracy:

- At Special Council on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 the Managing Director had confirmed that the Leader and Deputy Leader had been copied in at the bottom of the whistleblowing correspondence. As she had not been in post at that point in time, she was unable to contest either way if they had received a copy of the letter.
- The chronology outlined by the Leader was correct. It was the case that the police investigation was confirmed and commenced in July 2018. External legal advice had been sought in July 2018 which had confirmed that although allegations had been made against the two officers, these were unfounded and unproven so for that reason no action was taken at that point in order not to

pre-empt the outcome of the Audit Wales work or the police investigation.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance clarified the following points of accuracy:

- The Leader of the Labour Group had stated that there were only two officers named in the whistleblowing letter who at that time were currently employed by the Council. In fact, this was not correct and there were a number of officers employed by the Council at that time that had been named in the correspondence.
- Whilst the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance had not provided legal advice to the Lead Director or the Leader when the letter had been received in 2017, her advice would have been that the contents of the letter containing those bare allegations should not be shared with anyone because that would be contrary to the both the Whistleblowing Policy and the Members Code of Conduct.
- The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised Members that in British law a person was 'innocent until proven guilty' and until the process had been followed whether that was a criminal or civil process or an audit undertaken by a regulator, everyone was innocent of charges until properly proven and no-one should be subjected to any detriment by virtue of a mere allegation being made.

In reply to a question, the Managing Director reiterated that the Gwent Police investigation and the statement of individuals that were being called for questioning had not materialised until July 2018 after the Senior Management Review had been approved by Full Council. Council had, therefore, not been advised that Gwent Police had decided to move forward to a formal investigation until July 2018.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised the debate that had taken place thus far related to historical matters i.e. the Audit Wales public report, however, Members were requested to try not to anticipate what other matters could emerge as part of the internal investigation that had been agreed by Council. The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance reiterated her earlier point that even if the Leader had had knowledge of the details of the complaint, he could not have and should not have shared this information.



With regard to the Motion, this had been accepted as valid and if there had been concerns about the validity of the Motion they would have been raised with the proposer at that point in time. It was pointed out that in the current circumstances, it was not always easy to obtain 'wet' signatures on documents, therefore, advice had been provided by the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance that the signatories be copied into the Motion and this in essence signified their endorsement of the Motion. If any named signatory had objected they could have indicated their objection once the agenda had been made public.

In reply to a question, the Managing Director reiterated that the Motion was valid and there was no reason for it not to be considered and with regard to the inaccuracy referred to, the Managing Director pointed out that she had earlier in the debate had the opportunity to correct this. The Managing Director reiterated the point that legal advice was taken regarding the suspension of the named officers and this advice had been clear that there was no reason that this course of action should be taken as the allegations were at the time unproven and unfounded. The Managing Director concluded by stating that Members had a duty of care to employees and asked Members to be mindful of this during the course of the debate.

Following a lengthy discussion when various views and opinions were expressed, a recorded vote was then taken on the Motion as follows:

**In Support of the Motion** – Councillors P. Baldwin, D. Bevan, M. Cross, P. Edwards, L. Elias, K. Hayden, H. McCarthy, J. Millard, J. C. Morgan, K. Pritchard, T. Sharrem, T. Smith, S. Thomas, H. Trollope, D. Wilkshire, B. Willis and L. Winnett.

**Against the Motion** – Councillors J. Collins, M. Cook, N. Daniels, D. Davies, G. A. Davies, G. L. Davies, M. Day, D. Hancock, S. Healy, J. Hill, W. Hodgins, J. Holt, J. Mason, C. Meredith, M. Moore, J. P. Morgan, L. Parsons, G. Paulsen, K. Rowson, B. Summers, G. Thomas, J. Wilkins.

**The Motion was, therefore, not carried.**

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the above-named Censure Motion be not supported.

## 19. REVENUE BUDGET 2022/2023

Councillors Malcolm Cross, Lyn Elias, John Hill, Wayne Hodgins, Haydn Trollope, Thomas Smith and Bernard Willis declared an interest in this item but remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources explained that this was the final stage of the budget setting process and outlined the salient points contained within the report as follows:

- The Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner had issued precepts to the Council totalling £6,342,390.
- Town/Community Councils precepts amounted to £555,101.
- Including Discretionary rate relief of £208,000, the total net revenue budget for 2022/2023 was £168,267,696.

Section 25, Local Government Act 2003 required that the Chief Officer Resources of this Authority to report on the two following points:

- i. The robustness of the estimates included in the budget
- ii. The adequacy of the Authority's reserves.

In respect of (i) above, the Chief Officer was able to conclude that the estimates had been compiled with the most up to date information available and are suitably robust. Cost pressures have been considered during the budget setting process and for the medium term.

In respect of (ii) above, paragraphs 5.1.9 to 5.1.12 demonstrated that the Authority's financial position is improving and was looking to achieve a sustainable position for the forthcoming year and in the medium term. The reserves protocol would continue to review reserves in order to ensure that Reserves were kept at a sustainable level in the medium term.

In reply to a question raised regarding Town/Community Council precepts, the Chief Officer Resources confirmed that Abertillery &

Llanhilleth Community Council had increased its precept for 2022/23 by 52.39%.

A Member said whilst it was pleasing that a 0% increase in council tax for the 2022/23 financial year was being proposed, however, he expressed his concern that a Band D property in Blaenau Gwent had the highest council tax levels in Wales and this needed to be addressed. The Member continued by stating that it was pleasing to note that three of the Town Councils had reduced their levels of precepts for this year and asked whether the Council scrutinised and audited the town/community council precept levels for each of the areas.

The Chief Officer Resources confirmed that the town/community council had the autonomy to set their own precept levels and the Council had no control over the decisions made.

The Leader of the Labour Group suggested that maybe in future dialogue take place with the town/community councils regarding their precept levels. Another Member said that town/community council's expenditure should be scrutinised going forward.

In reply to question, the Chief Officer Resources advised that she was unaware of any measures that could be imposed to cap the level of town/community council precepts but would undertake to investigate. Each town/community council was subject to external audit which included the precept and the use of it on an annual basis.

The Leader of the Council wished to place on record his congratulations and appreciation to the Town Councils of Brynmawr, Tredegar and Nantyglo and Blaina for taking a very sensible approach in their budget setting process this year. He could not disagree with the comments made and said he would be willing to be involved in in-depth discussions with the town/community councils around the level of their precepts going forward. He, thereupon, proposed that recommendations 3.1 – 3.4 be endorsed.

It was unanimously,

**RESOLVED**, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and it was noted that:

**3.1** The Council agreed at its meeting on 17th February, 2022 a Council Tax increase of 0% for the 2022/2023 financial year. As a result, the Blaenau Gwent Council element of the full council tax charge would be:-

Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1,178.90	1,375.38	1,571.87	1,768.35	2,161.32	2,554.28	2,947.25	3,536.70	4,126.15

**3.2** The Council has calculated the following amounts for the year (2022/2023) in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Act 1992.

**3.3** The Council Tax base was the number of chargeable dwellings in each area adjusted for a number of items e.g. discounts payable, multiplied by the assumed collection rate which for 2022/2023 was 95%.

**a)** The amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3, of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year was:

20,876.86
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**b)** The amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

4,653.90	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,703.87	Brynmawr
2,717.74	Nantyglo & Blaina
4,745.30	Tredegar

**c)** For the year 2022/2023 the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council (totalling £6,342,390), in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown:

Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner								
Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
202.53	236.29	270.04	303.80	371.31	438.82	506.33	607.60	708.87

**3.4** That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2022/2023 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- a)** 238,686,776 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (d) of the Act.
- b)** 70,627,080 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) and (c) of the Act.
- c)** 168,059,696 Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
- d)** 208,000 Being the amount the Authority estimates in relation to Sections 47 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, for discretionary non-domestic rate relief.
- e)** 130,795,000 Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its Council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and additional grant.
- f)** 1,794.94 Being the amount at (c) above plus the amount at (d) above and less the amount at (e) above, all divided by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- g)** 555,101 Being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

**h)** 1,768.35 Being the amount at (f) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (g) above by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item related.

**i.** The amounts given by adding to the amount at (h) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

**j.**

1,830.45	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,793.59	Brynmawr
1,799.52	Nantyglo & Blaina
1,797.52	Tredegar

The amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (h) and (i) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, was applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands were:

k.

The County Borough Tax including Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,220.30	1,423.68	1,627.07	1,830.45	2,237.22	2,643.98	3,050.75	3,660.90	4,271.05
Brynmawr	1,195.73	1,395.01	1,594.31	1,793.59	2,192.17	2,590.74	2,989.32	3,587.18	4,185.04
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,199.68	1,399.62	1,599.58	1,799.52	2,199.42	2,599.30	2,999.20	3,599.04	4,199.88
Tredegar	1,198.35	1,398.07	1,597.80	1,797.52	2,196.97	2,596.41	2,995.87	3,595.04	4,194.21
Ebbw Vale	1,178.90	1,375.38	1,571.87	1,768.35	2,161.32	2,554.28	2,947.25	3,536.70	4,126.15

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (c) and (j) above, the Council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2022/23 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

The Full Tax of the County Borough Tax including Police and Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,422.83	1,659.97	1,897.11	2,134.25	2,608.53	3,082.80	3,557.08	4,268.50	4,979.92
Brynmawr	1,398.26	1,631.30	1,864.35	2,097.39	2,563.48	3,029.56	3,495.65	4,194.78	4,893.91
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,402.21	1,635.91	1,869.62	2,103.32	2,570.73	3,038.12	3,505.53	4,206.64	4,907.75
Tredegar	1,400.88	1,634.36	1,867.84	2,101.32	2,568.28	3,035.23	3,502.20	4,202.64	4,903.08
Ebbw Vale	1,381.43	1,611.67	1,841.91	2,072.15	2,532.63	2,993.10	3,453.58	4,144.30	4,835.02

## 20. **CORPORATE FEES & CHARGES 2022/2023**

Councillors Stewart Healy and Wayne Hodgins declared an interest in this item and remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and advised that:

- The current Fees and Charges register had been reviewed to:
- Ensure all fees & charges included on the register were relevant for 2022/2023.
- Reflect changes in local and national policy and charges.

- Reflect the assumptions included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, where appropriate.
- The register included charges which had received:
  - An inflationary uplift of 2% per annum as included agreed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
  - No fee increases
  - Fees and charges that were proposed to be increased by more than 2%.
- The proposed fees for Licensing would be considered by the Licensing Committee and had been included in the Register for completeness. It was proposed to maintain the fees at 2021/2022 level based on the National framework full cost model.
- Social Services (variable) – These fees were currently under negotiation with Providers to reflect the appropriate increase to cover the additional cost of the Real Living Wage, increase in NI Contributions, energy costs etc. However, the delay in receiving the full guidance on the implementation of the real living wage had created difficulty with these negotiations. Therefore, it was proposed that delegated power be granted to the Corporate Director of Social Services to set these fees and charges for 2022/2023.
- The fees and charges for Aneurin Leisure Trust were attached for core services for 2022/23 to be approved by Council in-line with funding and management agreement. The proposed increase to the majority of fees was around 3% however, a number of fees had reduced by up to 30% and a number had increased by up to 36% which was due to standardising the junior and concession rates across the business as a set percentage of the standard fee to improve the consistency moving forward.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the report be endorsed subject to the following amendments:

- An increase of 10% on School Meals would not be applied. The cost would remain at current 2021/2022 prices.
- The price of Meals on Wheels would not increase and the cost would be retained at 2021/2022 prices.



A Member said that at the time when the wellbeing of children was paramount, a number of the uplifts to charges proposed by Aneurin Leisure Trust would cause a barrier for children, young people and the community to participate in sports and activities. He was unable to condone an increase of these magnitudes and felt that the percentage increase was disproportionate when efforts were being made to encourage young people to participate in sports and said that these increases should in line with inflation only. The charges referred to related to:

- Junior Swim – 17.4% increase
- Concessionary Junior Swim – 16.11% increase
- Lifestyle Studio – Concessionary Junior – 30.77% increase

The Leader of the Council said that leisure was traditionally a fragile budget and said he was unsure as to what the potential impact of not agreeing the proposed charges may have on projected revenue streams.

The Member proposed that discussions take place with Aneurin Leisure Trust to explain that the percentage increases were disproportionate and would cause barriers for children and young people to participate in sports and activities and a request made that due consideration be given to a percentage increase in line with inflation.

The Corporate Director of Education clarified that as part of the budget process Aneurin Leisure Trust undertook a benchmarking exercise of their proposed fees and charges with neighbouring authorities for similar activities. Whilst he did not have the information available as to what impact any downward adjustments would have on the Trust's budget in terms of income streams, it would have an impact on income generation but undertook to hold discussions with the Trust regarding the concerns that had been raised.

In reply to request, the Corporate Director of Education confirmed that Aneurin Leisure Trust proposed fees and charges could be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in future to obtain the views of Members prior to the information being reported to Full Council.

A discussion ensued when it proposed that the report be accepted pending a discussion between the Corporate Director of Education and Aneurin Leisure Trust regarding their proposed levels of fees and charges. This proposal was seconded.

RESOLVED accordingly.

It was, thereupon, unanimously

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing amendments, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely:

- The register of Fees & Charges for 2022/2023 attached at Appendix 1, and the core price increases relating to Aneurin Leisure Trust attached at Appendix 2 be approved.
- Delegated power and responsibility be granted to the Director of Social Services for setting the fees and charges for 2022/2023 relating to the provision of external social care.

**21. TREASURY MANAGEMENT – TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT, INVESTMENT STRATEGY & MRP POLICY STATEMENT 2021/2022 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke briefly to the report and highlighted the salient points contained therein. It was pointed out that local authorities were required to prepare, before the start of each financial year, a statement of their policy on making revenue provision to cover debt repayments (known as MRP or Minimum Revenue Provision) in respect of that financial year and submit it to full Council for approval. The MRP statement for 2022/23 was, therefore, also included as part of the Treasury Strategy Statement (Appendix A). The Treasury Management Policy Statement was also attached for information as Appendix B.

These policies would be adhered to at all times with the prime objectives being firstly the security and secondly the liquidity of investments and would also seek to minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a prudent level of debt redemption.

There were no significant changes to the proposed policy for 2022/23. The main change included further development of an annual investment strategy to provide additional opportunities for the higher levels of investment currently forecast in the medium term. In addition, the policy

detailed the prudential indicators which would monitor performance, which would be reported to Members throughout the course of the 2022/2023 financial year.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Annual Treasury Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy Statement for 2022/2023 financial year and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators contained therein be approved.

**22. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022/2023**

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and explained that the Capital Strategy was intended to give a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The development of a Capital Strategy allowed flexibility to engage with Full Council to ensure that the overall strategy, governance procedures and risk appetite were fully understood by all elected Members.

Whilst there were no significant changes required to be made to the 2022/2023 Capital Strategy, recent developments to The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management and Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities which had been revised in 2020/2021 would result in changes that would impact on future Capital Strategy reports from 2023/2024 onwards when formal adoption of the revised codes was required.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Capital Strategy 2022/2023 be agreed.

**23. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES REPORT 2022/2023**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety spoke in detail to the report and highlighted the determinations contained within the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) for 2022/23.

It was noted that as local elections were currently pending, the new arrangements would become effective from 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 and for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2021 to 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 the current 2021/2022 IRPW determinations would apply.

In reply to a question, the Organisational Development Manager confirmed that it was the choice of individual Members whether to forego or reduce their levels of remuneration.

The Leader of the Council advised that the Council previously responded to the IRPW as part of the consultation period on the draft 2022/2023 determinations expressing objections and concerns to the proposals and stated that the Council was now required to note the final determinations.

The Leader of the Labour Group expressed his concern regarding the proposed increases to remuneration levels at the current time when there were severe financial constraints being experienced by so many. He, thereupon, proposed that the status quo be retained i.e. remuneration be maintained at 2021/2022 levels. Other Members concurred with these comments and expressed their collective concern regarding the current increase in the cost of living and expressed concerns regarding noting the determinations going forward.

The Leader of the Council reiterated that a collective response had been forwarded expressing concerns and objections to the proposals and the determinations were for noting only and pointed out that these determinations would be applicable throughout Wales and it would be the decision of individual Councillors to accept the level of remuneration that they felt appropriate.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised that the report was for noting only and not for approval and the determinations would be implemented regardless of concerns expressed. This was a unique situation and there was no option to reject these determinations. Members objections had been noted but it was a matter for individual Members to accept the appropriate level of remuneration.

For clarification, the Chief Officer Resources advised that the Council was legally obliged to implement the determinations of the IRPW report and reiterated that it was for individual Members to decide whether to give up or forego any element of the remuneration. It was noted that should a Member decide to voluntarily forgo part of their remuneration, the national insurance and tax deductions would be based on the net amount. Remuneration was paid as part of the Council budget and any underspends would be retained within this budget.

For clarification, the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised that a decision or alternative motion could not be taken (i.e. to retain current remuneration levels) that would bind all Members because the determinations were permitted in law and was a matter for individuals to decide whether to accept the full amount. The Chief Officer Resources added that in terms of compliance the IRPW Panel legally required the relevant authority to comply with the determinations and implement the determinations within each financial year.

The Leader of the Labour Group, therefore, proposed that as the determinations would apply to Members of the new Council, that the report be deferred and considered at that point in time.

The Leader of the Council seconded the proposal as the Council was united in its objection with regard to the determinations to increase remuneration levels and even these objections had been submitted as part of the consultation period to the IRPW, they still remained.

Following a lengthy discussion when it was suggested that the decision be made by the new Council. It was, therefore, unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be **deferred** and considered by the new Council following the Local Election in May.

**24. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/2023**

The following officers declared an interest in this item and remained in the meeting whilst the item was considered:

- Michelle Morris – Managing Director
- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Lynn Phillips – Corporate Director of Education
- Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources
- Bernadette Elias – Interim Chief Officer Commercial
- Andrea Jones – Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
- Andrea Prosser – Head of Organisational Development
- Clive Rogers – Head of Community Services
- Ellie Fry – Head of Regeneration
- Sarah King – Head of Governance & Partnerships
- Gina Taylor – Service Manager Accountancy
- Gemma Wasley – Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
- Richard Bridge - Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety
- Steve Berry – Data Protection & Governance Officer
- Louise Bishop – Press & Publicity Officer
- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer
- Leeann Turner – Democratic & Committee Support Officer

However, should debate ensue those officers who had declared an interest would leave the meeting at the appropriate juncture with the exception of:

- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer (minute clerk)

The report of the Head of Organisational Development was submitted for consideration.

The Head of Organisational Development spoke briefly to the report and it was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed namely, that the Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023 be approved.

25. **MEMBERSHIPS REPORT**

**Advisory Panel for Local Authority Governors**

The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 to appoint in principle:

**All Saints Primary School** – Laura Newall

**Tredegar Comprehensive School** – Adrian Tuck

It was, thereupon unanimously,

RESOLVED that the above appointments be endorsed.

--- **APPRECIATION**

The Leader of the Council at this juncture announced that this was the last formal meeting of Council that the Managing Director would be attending prior to leaving to take up her new position and said it would be remiss not to take the opportunity to genuinely express his appreciation to Michelle for all her hard work and dedication to the Council during her time as Managing Director. He had found Michelle to have been a very effective worker, she had worked with all political leadership on all sides of the Council and had been fair, straight and had worked hard to deliver on the priorities that had been important for the Council and its residents.

Michelle had undertaken a massive amount of work in transforming services and bringing efficiency and modernising the organisation and in the past 2 years with Managing Director at the helm, the way Council had navigated through the hugely significant challenges of the Covid pandemic had been phenomenal, working in conjunction with colleagues and Members in Blaenau Gwent and as part of the regional emergency response.

The Leader said that he was aware of the respect and esteem Michelle had built up in 5 years with colleague chief executive's and officers across Gwent, the region and Wales. He concluded by stating that it had been an absolute pleasure and privilege working with Michelle and

wished her well in her new role as the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Leader of the Labour Group concurred with the comments made by the Leader and said that Michelle would be a loss to the Council but wished her well in her new role.

The Chair added her congratulations to Michelle in her new role.

The Managing Director expressed her appreciation to both Leaders for their kind words and expressed her appreciation to Council for the opportunity that she had been provided with to undertake the role for the last four and half years. It had been a privilege and she was proud of what had been achieved over that period. The last two years which the Council had managed to navigate its way through, had been an extraordinary time for everyone.

The Managing Director took the opportunity by expressing her appreciation to the Corporate Leadership Team who had supported her through her time in the role and said she knew these officers would continue to lead the Council from the professional side and to staff who were the Council's biggest asset, who had gone above and beyond in extraordinary circumstances and she expressed her appreciation to them for their continued commitment and support to Council. The Managing Director concluded by wishing the Council, staff and Blaenau Gwent very best wishes for the future.

**26. EXEMPT ITEMS**

To receive and consider the following reports which in the opinion of the proper officer were exempt items taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reasons for the decisions for the exemption were available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).

The Chief Officer Commercial & Customer left the meeting at this juncture.



Item Nos 27 – 30 were considered simultaneously.

**27. SHORTLISTING – JNC OFFICERS**

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2022.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the decisions contained therein be noted.

**28. SHORTLISTING – INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Chief Officer Commercial and Customer declared an interest in this item.

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the decisions contained therein be noted.

**29. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – JNC OFFICERS**

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2022.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the post be offered to Vikki Gledhill on a salary in accordance with JNC 1 (£51,407 - £56,544).

**30. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Chief Officer Commercial and Customer declared an interest in this item.

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt

information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2022.

It was unanimously,

**RESOLVED** that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the post be offered to Damien McCann on a salary in accordance with JNC Chief Executive (£102,976 - £111,055).