MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 17 December 2025 at 7.04 pm in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.

PRESENT

Councillors: Josh Rawcliffe (Chair), Lucy Harmer (Vice Chair), Frankie Baker, Steve Bard, Ivor Beynon, Richard Catlin, Ralph Henderson MBE, Chris Hill, Bruno Góes Maciel (via video-link), Ben Owen-Jones (via video-link), Barrie Page, Mike Whatley and Peter Adamson.

Absent: Graham White, Mark Lewis, Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons, Bernard Wall and Tracey Dyson

Youth Representatives: Riley Overton

Officers: Erika Davies (Clerk) and Molly Jones (Deputy Clerk)

Others: Dave Leech and David Arnold (BGCBC)

129. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Graham White, Mark Lewis, Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons and Tracey Dyson.

130. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Barrie Page, Josh Rawcliffe and Ben Owen-Jones all declared an interest in agenda item 8 as they are all local school governors.

131. Minutes 26 November 2025

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the amended minutes as a true and correct record

132. Public Questions

None.

133. Presentation from Dave Leech about 'The Deal'.

Dave Leech, Adults & Communities for Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Councils (and Deputy Chief Executive for Torfaen Council), introduced himself and advised that he was at the meeting to inform Councillors about 'The Deal'. He introduced David Arnold a colleague from BGCBC and someone who is involved with community engagement.

Firstly, it was explained that BG and Torfaen Councils are federated, not merged and each have their own separate version of 'The Deal'.

The vision behind 'The Deal' comes from an increasing crisis of demand on public services and a disconnect from the public in terms of the level of services the Council can offer. There is a need to change as the delivery of services is not currently working as a 21st century model. 'The Deal' will focus on five of the Marmot Principles and how Council will shape the services they offer and deliver to the community. In essence, 'The Deal' will be built on trust and will be the glue that binds the whole system together, increasing BG council and communities working together in partnership.

'The Deal' is not simply about consultation or an engagement exercise but a concept of shared ownership and a core programme to radically rethink how BG Council delivers its

services. It's about putting programmes in place to shape and restructure services and demonstrate how they can work for the benefit of the community.

BG want to ask ALCC if they are willing to join them on the journey of 'The Deal, communicating key messages to residents, identifying the community groups who want to collaborate and help shape the services to be delivered.

Initial feedback to the presentation from councillors present at the meeting was positive with the majority welcoming a change in culture and support for the proposal and agreeing action is needed along with the community taking ownership of the area. Concern was expressed not only over the apparent lack of current projects listed for Abertillery and also the lack of mention of areas outside the centre of Abertillery, such as, Llanhilleth and Swfrydd but also lack of communication between BG and ALCC especially in light of the signing of the Charter agreement.

Overall, Council agreed that the scheme seems like a move in the right direction and of course they want to support anything that brings growth and prosperity to the area. However, money needs to be invested in order to bring big projects to fruition.

Councillor Feedback about 'The Deal' presentation.

Steve Bard – I am really encouraged by 'The Deal' and I'd like to think you are taking to an open door, when it comes to this council

Ralph Henderson – I see 'The Deal' as a positive step and I 100% support the idea, The area needs a change in culture and attitude and we want to make a partnership work.

Frankie Baker – A lot of the information in the presentation has resonated with me. There is so much potential in the area and it's one of the reasons I became a councillor. Action is needed, we've done enough brainstorming. I want the children and people growing up and living here to have an enriching life. What actual, practical things are ging to be put into place to achieve this?

Peter Adamson – I don't disagree with what you've said but BGCBC should have always been engaging with the communities. The town lacks prosperity and if we can't stimulate that, there's always going to be a bad feeling about the area and communities who are struggling. With the closure of the big council building, there is a lack of trade in town.

DL - 'The Deal' is about a different way of BGCBC structuring their services. This is genuinely something different about true involvement in service design. We're not talking about consultation and engagement but it's shared ownership of the issues raised.

Bruno Goes Maciel – Our town is one of the most deprived areas in Wales and a lot of our deprivation has been caused by abonnement. There needs to be investment in education and activities for young people. Is 'The Deal' real or is it another gimmick? People are already paying council tax and it's time the council addressed the needs of the community.

DL - This is the core programme for both BGCBC and Torfaen council to radically think how we redesign services and I'm going to be completely honest and upfront and say we aren't going to get there straight away. There will be examples where we don't get it right over the next few months but I expect to see that this will become less and less the common position and you should notice more engagement from officers.

Barrie Page – A community needs to take ownership of their area. I can see the value in 'The Deal'. There needs to be trust and shared responsibility. However, there has been a recent example of 'The Charter' between ALCC and BGCBC not being adhered to and this presents a problem of trust. There are 7 Marmot Principles but only 5 are mentioned in 'The Deal'.

DL – I hope you've had an apology from the officers about this. There absolutely should have been some engagement with you (ALCC). I am more than happy to work with you and the officers involved to stop 'The Charter' becoming hollow words and, there needs to be a performance framework alongside it to hold it accountable about the speed of responses and number of engagements, so you can assess how effectively we're working against it.

- The missions mentioned in 'The Deal' are centered around those Marmot Principles that are driving health equity in BG, so it's not that we're neglecting other parts of those Marmot Principles. They will feature throughout those missions but the weighting in terms of the activity that we want to build with the communities and, where we think those particular challenges on health equity are linked into those 5 key areas.

Richard Catlin – There are no current projects listed for Abertillery except for historical ones. There is no clear indication that the regeneration department are doing anything for Abertillery. I fully support 'The Deal' but I want a fair deal for Abertillery. I feel very strongly about it. It feels as though nothing has changed and are we missing the boat yet again on taking up opportunities to

DL – I will feed back to the Director about the lack of consultation and representation on the Abertillery Placemaking Plan. I am disappointed if officers have not come out to you to engage with you lately.

Mike Whatley – There is more and more pressure on social services and it's not going to get any better. 'The Deal' mentions empowering communities to make better decisions about their health and lifestyle choices. How are you going to do that? Also, if you want us to trust you, we need to have investment in the area. A lot of what you've said sounds like empty words and promises.

DL – We are putting programmes in place to encourage demonstration on how they are working with communities on how they shape their services. Health and wellbeing are so important and we have to get this right together to meet the core demand areas.

Chris Hill – I am very proud to be from Abertillery. I've recently had a copy of the Connect newspaper but there is only a dozen or so sentences about Abertillery. Everything else is about Ebbw Vale and Tredegar. This is shocking. Also, in a previous PlaCE committee meeting, we've fed back to BGCBC about one-way systems and parking issues and it's falling on deaf ears.

DL – Going forward we will be expecting you to work on issues like this. We need this information to be fed back to us so that the issues are being escalated up to Director levels.

Ivor Beynon – 'The Deal' sounds fantastic but I feel we've been here before. We've lost a big employer, Tillery Foods, and we have lots of families relying on food banks. We have people wanting to take their own destiny in their own hands and they are being told to go to Goldworks in Ebbw Vale, yet again out of town. We are constantly being told that nothing is getting done due to anti-social behaviour, an example of this is the old library being boarded up. This is not acceptable. We have fantastic youth works in the area and we need to work with people in the community to improve the community. How can we get more people in the community engaged to learn about the area?

Lucy Harmer – As a town council, councillors, individuals, as people who are proud to work here and raise our children here, we definitely want to help but we need something back. We

have people in the community who are willing to help and offer their expertise, time and effort but a lot of it comes down to money. We need money and large-scale help to move some of the bigger projects, such as the reopening of The Stute. This in turn, will motivate and benefit everyone involved and hopefully will have a snowball effect on youth, pride, and care and these are things that without decent monetary investment, won't happen and so need to be considered.

Ben-Owen Jones – There has been a distinct lack of mentioning the areas outside of Abertillery. Please try and remember that this council covers areas outside of Abertillery, such as Llanhilleth and Swffryd.

The Chair thanked Dave Leech for the presentation.

- Dave Leech and David Arnold left the meeting at 20.06.

134. Council Grant Application – Abertillery Aikido Dojo

After asking for more information from the grant applicants, Members were concerned that there didn't appear to be any other funding revenue and the group would be relying on grant funding for its future.

The Council **RESOLVED** not to award the grant.

135. Section 6 Biodiversity Report

The Chair thanked the Officers and Councillors involved in producing the report.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the report and publish it on the ALCC website and submit to One Voice Wales by the 31st December 2025 deadline.

136. School Transport

As Chair of the Community Empowerment Committee, under which the School Transport budget lines fall under, Barrie Page explained that the reason this item had come to Full Council was due to the fact that the Committee could not make a decision, due to the number of declarations of interest at the last few meetings and being inquorate. Barrie Page, Josh Rawcliffe and Ben Owen-Jones left the meeting at this point.

Deputy Clerk, Erika Davies, explained that there was no specific spending power for this budget line and therefore it would come under s137 and therefore Members must agree that the spending must be commensurate with the benefit of the number of inhabitants.

Bruno Góes Maciel stated that this spend would not only benefit the proposed 465 children in receipt of Free School Meals, but also everyone on their household and therefore would have a much wider reach in the community.

Chris Hill asked how many trips the school were planning and if the trips would include children of all ages. Deputy Clerk Erika Davies, said the specific number was not known but that the children's ages ranged from primary to secondary.

Council **RESOLVED** to award the £10,000 budget to children in receipt of free school meals at ALC secondary campus, Roseheyworth campus, Six Bells campus, Tillery Street campus, St. Illtyd's Primary and Sofrydd Primary (Local Government Act 1972 s137).

137. Abertillery Institute Support Letter

The Council **RESOLVED** for the Clerk to write a letter of support for Abertillery Institute, confirming the backing of Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council in the Institute's grant application for National Lottery funding for renovation works.

138. Committee Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the following committee meeting minutes.

Leisure and Tourism – 07 November 2025

HR – 29 October 2025

HR – 26 November 2025

PlaCE – 17 October 2025

PlaCE – 31 October 2025

Community Empowerment – 30 October 2025

Party in the Park – 26 April 2025

Fun Run – 17 May 2024

Cwmtillery Ward Grant – 07 November 2025

139. School Governor Representatives

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the motion to reinstate Ben Owen-Jones as the Council representative on the Governing Body of Sofrydd Primary School. The Chair thanked Ben for his work with the school.

140. Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public

Members were recommended to consider and resolve that, by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Council **RESOLVED** to exclude the Press and Public.

141. New Website

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the new website and its publication, as recommended by the Community Empowerment Committee.

142. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 14 January at 7pm (budget meeting)

The meeting ended at 8:35pm.

Minutes produced by Erika Davies, Deputy Clerk.

DRAFT

Signed as a correct record by the Chair……

Date……

DRAFT