MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 09 November 2026 AT 6.30 pm at the Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery and via video conferencing (Zoom).

PRESENT

Councillors: Barrie Page (Chair), Bruno Gòes Maciel and Ben Owen-Jones (via video-link)

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

Absent: Josh Rawcliffe, Tracey Dyson, Lucy Harmer and Peter Adamson (non-voting)

The meeting was opened at 6.30 pm by the Chair but the fire alarm went off and everyone had to evacuate the building.

The meeting reconvened at 7.00 pm when it was safe to re-enter the building.

30. Apologies for absence

Josh Rawcliffe, Lucy Harmer and Tracey Dyson. The Deputy Clerk informed the Chair that Councillor Mike Whatley has resigned from this committee.

31. Declarations of interest or dispensations

None.

32. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

33. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 18 September 2026

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the minutes were a true and correct record with the following amendment to minute number 27

"The Committee agreed a first draft of the budget for 2027-2028

- BGCBC Detached Team: No change, stay at £65k
- Off The Streets: No change, stay at £65k
- New Website Cost: Budget line to be removed
- Extra-Curricular School Transport: The funding is being moved into the Section 137 budget but the Committee would like to ensure it is increased from £10k to £11k so Bro Helyg Welsh School could be included.
- Councillor Surgeries: The budget line to remain but with £0 budget for 2027-2028.

This would mean the overall budget for the Community Empowerment Committee would be £130,000, a reduction of £10k from previous year."

34. Website

The Committee were pleased with the website and its speed.

Deputy Clerk Molly Jones updated

35. Community Surveys

The Committee discussed the feedback from a recent survey that was completed online, through distribution to the community by councillors and at council events. Overall, the Committee felt that this was a good first effort at community engagement. There are concerns over whether all of the demographic is being reached by the methods used and if a postal survey may be a better option.

It was noted that people who were already attending the events completed surveys and therefore we may not be reaching the people that do not know what the council does. Out of the responses received, more than 50% of people said they want council to do the same or more of what they currently do.

The Committee wants to look into the possibility of having a poster placed in the notice board at Llanhilleth train station. The poster would have a QR code on which would link to the survey.

The Committee **RESOLVED** for officers to contact Transport for Wales and see if there is the option of putting a poster in the noticeboard at Llanhilleth train station.

Josh Rawcliffe was going to give an update on the progress of the youth survey but as he was absent from the meeting, this has been adjourned.

36. Community Engagement Strategy

A draft Community Engagement Strategy was presented to the committee but they felt it was not relevant to this council. They asked officers to source an alternative policy, possibly one that is already in use by another community council and in Wales and could be adapted. They also asked we could put something about a strategy in the next newsletter to let the community know that this is something we are working on.

37. Off the Streets

Barrie Page gave an overview of the report produced by Alana Insley about Off the Streets. This is a project that receives funding from council and operates in the Llanhilleth and Swfrydd areas.

The Committee felt that the report was very comprehensive and gave a clear picture of what the project does and how it helps young people in the community. The report shows that there is a clear and increased demand for the service and that running costs are increasing. The Committee feels that funding for this project needs to grow to meet the demands of the service or it will suffocate.

The Committee would like a plan of how to manage the growth of this project and the BG Youth Service Detached Teams (another organisation that received funding from council. This is something the committee needs to discuss and develop with feedback from the teams involved.

38. Budget 2027-2028

The Committee **RESOLVED** to put forward the following budget lines for 2027/28.

- BGCBC Youth Service Detached Team £65,000 - (same as 26/27 but waiting on a report to council at November's meeting)
- Off the Streets £75,000 – an increase of £10,000 based on the recruitment of four extra staff and to increase Alana's hours from 15-18 hours a week.

- Councillor Surgeries £500 (the name of this budget line is to change to Community Engagement) - increase of £500 for postal surveys, possible purchase of a table and surgeries.

39. Date of next meeting

As needed.

The meeting ended at 8:14 pm.

These minutes were produced by Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk).

Signed as a correct record by the Chair:……

Dated:……

DRAFT