

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

3 February, 2016

The Mayor: Councillor **A.P.H.Davies**

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor **Mrs.S.M.Penry**

Councillors: H.M.Bebell, Mrs P.Bebell, A.Carter,
D.W.Davies, Mrs.R.Davies, Mrs.J.Dudley,
M.Ellis, J.S.Evans, S.K.Hunt, H.N.James,
Mrs.L.H.James, M.L.James, A.Jenkins,
E.E.Jones, M.Jones, Mrs.D.Jones, R.G.Jones,
S.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, J.Miller,
C.Morgan, J.D.Morgan, Ms.C.Morgans,
Mrs.S.Paddison, M.Protheroe, L.M.Purcell,
S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, J.Rogers,
A.Taylor, A.J.Taylor, A.H.Thomas, J.Warman,
D.Whitelock, Mrs.L.G.Williams and
A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, A.Evans, G.Nutt,
N. Jarman, D.Rees, D.Michael, Mrs.K.Jones,
R.George and Mrs.A.Manchipp

Representatives of the Translation Service: Present

1. **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2015/16**

RESOLVED: that the reserve movements and budget virements exceeding £500,000, be approved.

2. **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING**

RESOLVED: that the budget for 2015/16 of £66.729m, be approved and that the position in relation to expenditure as at 31 December 2015, as contained in the circulated report, be noted.

3. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COUNCIL'S TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY 2015/16**

Members sought clarification in relation to the overall costs of the Authority's loans and questioned whether the Authority should use its Reserves? Members also questioned the effect this would have should Local Government Reorganisation take place. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised Members that it was prudent to repay the loans over a 50 year basis rather than the existing policy of repayment over 422 years. Members were also advised that the Council was using its reserves to reduce the amount of loans taken out and hence save on interest costs.

RESOLVED: that the revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for the 2015/16 financial year, as contained in the circulated report, be approved.

4. **REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17**

Members received an overview of the above report wherein it was noted that the Authority was able to confirm its Net Budget but was unable to set its Budget Requirement until such time as the Welsh Government published the final Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates. A further report would therefore be prepared for Members' decision on 10th March 2016. Members then raised the following:-

The successful partnership working with the Trade Unions was acknowledged together with wide consultation undertaken with stakeholders.

Members raised the current Home to School Transport Policy and the commitment given to undertake a review thereof in the

Autumn and asked for clarification on how this was to be undertaken. The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Policy had been consulted on, scrutinised and approved 2 years ago and a commitment had been given at that time to review the Policy after 2 years had elapsed. Until then the current Policy would be adhered to. Member noted that the Welsh Government had agreed that the wording surrounding the legislation and guidance was ambiguous and supported the Authority in using the current Policy in the interim. Members also raised a question on the safe walking route to Ysgol Bae Baglan. They were informed that as the school was now nearing completion and the roads had been completed, the route would be further inspected.

Members were please to note the additional £1.2m available to the Environment Directorate Street Scene Services for such things as grass cutting, etc.

Members also commented on the pressures being put on Local Authorities by the Welsh Government by not making its decision on the final Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates until 9th March, 2016.

In addition Members recognised the loss of experienced staff as a result of the current ER/VR scheme where, in the region of 100 staff were expected to leave the Authority's employment by the end of March 2016.

In relation to ELLL616 re the Schools Cleaning Service and the reduction in subsidy by £60k, Members queried what was the impact of closing the schools identified in the Strategic School Improvement Programme on the service? Members were advised that the Council provided an in house cleaning service to primary schools and that this net subsidy cost needed to be borne by schools. Members were also informed that the level of savings had been reduced from those included in the draft proposals and this amount was required to set a balanced budget.

Members were pleased that the Cefn Coed Museum would remain open and that discussions/negotiations would continue on how to make it more financially viable.

Members noted the current position in relation to the libraries at Coedffranc and Baglan and the future sale of the second mobile library.

The Leader of Council then summed up and thanked Members, Officers, staff and Union representatives for the work in putting together a balanced budget.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the revised budget position and arrangements for 2015/16, as contained in the circulated report, be noted;
 2. That compliance with the Welsh Government's requirement to protect Schools funding, be confirmed;
 3. That:
 - (a) In relation to the Council's Revenue Budget 2016/17 the Equality Impact Assessment and Crime and Disorder impacts in setting the budget for 2016/17, be noted;
 - (b) The Net Revenue Budget for 2016/17, and the service plans for the delivery of the budgets, be approved;
 - (c) The budget/forward financial plan savings (outlined in Appendix 3), be approved;
 - (d) The Corporate Directors be instructed to progress the savings and improvement programme for the Authority;
 - (e) Determination of Fees and charges for non executive functions, applicable in 2016/17, be delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Leader of Council, Deputy Leader and Chair of the relevant Non Executive Committee, together with fees and charges applicable in any subsequent financial year which, in the opinion of the Corporate Director, need to be set in advance of that financial year for operational reasons;
 - (f) A report setting out the Council's Budget Requirement and Council Tax for 2016/17 be forwarded to the Council meeting of the 10 March 2016, following the publication of the Final Local Government Settlement on 2nd March 2016.

5. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/19**

RESOLVED: that the Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2018/19, as detailed in the circulated report, be approved and that the Programme be kept under review and updated as appropriate.

6. **URGENT ITEM**

Because of the need to deal with now with the matter contained in Minute No. 7 below, the Chairman agreed that it could be raised at today's meeting as an urgent item pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972

Reason

Due to the recent announcement made by TATA.

7. **TATA**

At the request of Cabinet, the Chief Executive gave Members of Council a verbal update on the recent announcement made by TATA on job losses at the Port Talbot plant. A Taskforce had been established and efforts were being made to enable Port Talbot to be designated an Enterprise Zone. In addition the Taskforce was looking at the effect the announcement would have on TATA's local supply chain.

The Chief Executive would circulate the Terms of Reference of the Taskforce and would keep Members up to date.

CHAIRPERSON