

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

1 February, 2017

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

Councillors: A.Carter, Ms.C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley,
A.P.H.Davies, D.W.Davies, Mrs.R.Davies,
Mrs C.Edwards, J.S.Evans, M.Harvey,
S.K.Hunt, H.N.James, Mrs.L.H.James,
M.L.James, R.James, A.Jenkins, Mrs.D.Jones,
R.G.Jones, D.Keogh, E.V.Latham, A.Llewelyn,
Mrs.K.Lloyd, A.R.Lockyer, J.Miller, Mrs.S.Miller,
J.D.Morgan, Mrs.S.Paddison, Mrs.K.Pearson,
D.M.Peters, R.Phillips, M.Protheroe,
L.M.Purcell, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees,
P.D.Richards, J.Rogers, A.Taylor, A.J.Taylor,
A.H.Thomas, A.L.Thomas, J.Warman,
D.Whitelock, Mrs.L.G.Williams, Mrs.A.Wingrave
and A.N.Woolcock

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

Representatives of the Translation Service: Present

1. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Councillor M.Harvey

The report of the Corporate Directors' Group on Budget Monitoring 2016/17, the Budget for 2017/18 and the report of the Head of Financial Services on the

Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2019/20 as it related to CCTV as he is employed by the South Wales Police.

Councillor S.Hunt

The report of the Corporate Directors' Group on the Budget for 2017/18 as he is a member of the Friends of Cefn Coed.

2. **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2016/17**

Members considered the above report and asked for assurances that car parking charges would not be increased to offset the £231k overspend in parking, which had arisen following a reduction in the fee charges introduced early 2016. Members were advised that the budget report for 2017/18 proposed that the £133k included in the local government settlement would be used for the additional unhypothocated £3m received (total available across all Wales) to offset the overspend.

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

3. **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2016/17**

RESOLVED: that the budget for 2016/17 of £55.093m, be approved and that the position in relation to expenditure as at 31 December 2016, as contained in the circulated report, be noted.

4. **BUDGET 2017/18**

Members received an overview of the Report of the Corporate Director's Group on the proposed Budget for 2017/18.

Following the presentation Members raised the following:-

- At the meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 31 March, 2017 the possibility of using some of the General Reserves (which had increased by over £2m more than predicted and was predicted to increase to £20m by the end of 2021) to

underpin the proposed cuts to the Schools base budget and also to be used at the Pontardawe Arts Centre and Cefn Coed Museum. In addition concern was expressed that should the cut in the schools base budget result in cuts in the number of teachers this would mitigate the improvements being realised as part of the 21st Century Schools. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised that there would need to be a further £24m cut up to 2019/20 and that in order to minimise the impact and to promote sustainability/wellbeing it would be prudent to maintain reserves. A reasonable amount of reserves when not in austerity would be in the region of 5%, whilst in times of austerity it would be prudent to be at a higher level. Members were reminded that General Reserves were needed for emergencies such as flooding, etc and could only be spent once.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning advised that around £100m had been invested in upgrading existing premises and building new schools. There was an expectation that schools managed their reserves responsibly and that staff absences were closely managed.

- Members asked that, in order to address the increase in the number of elderly service users and the resultant increase in demands, whether a further £1m could be diverted into the budget for adult services. Members were also concerned at the possibility of outsourcing services within Social Services. The Chief Executive advised that whilst he could appreciate the concerns of Members, the proposals represented a prudent approach to 2017/18 and beyond. Seventy-five percent of the budget allocation was to Social Services and Education and the proposals attempted to strike a balance against the disproportionate cuts made to Environment over recent years. The Director of Social Services, Health and Housing advised Council that the Authority delivered some of its services through 3rd parties. He also confirmed that there were no ER/VR applications currently being considered.
- Members expressed concern at the £10k cut to the Cefn Coed Museum, and asked that investment be made into tourism within the County Borough. The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning advised that the Cefn Coed Museum had been closed for urgent remedial works, in liaison with CADW, and would reopen again over the Easter period. He also advised that £10k would be carried forward from the

underspend in the current year's budget to provide funding for the re opening.

The Leader of Council then summed up and commended to the proposals to Council for approval.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That, having due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment information set out in the circulated report and its Appendix 7, the following be approved:-
 - a. The latest budget position 2016/17, the revised budget position and arrangements for 2016/17;
 - b. The Council's Revenue Budget 2017/18;
 - Taking into account the Equality Impact Assessment and Crime and Disorder impacts in setting the budget for 2017/18;
 - The Net Revenue Budget requirement for 2017/18, and the service plans for the delivery of the budgets;
 - The budget/forward financial plan savings (outlined in Appendix 4 to the circulated report);
 - Corporate Directors be instructed to progress the savings and improvement programme for the Authority.
 - c. Fees and charges for non-executive functions – that the determination of the following matters be delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Council Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of the relevant Non Executive Committee
 - Fees and charges applicable in 2017/18
 - Fees and charges applicable in any subsequent financial year and which, in the opinion of the Corporate Director, need to be set in advance of that financial year for operational reasons;
 - d. Council Tax 2017/18 – That the 2017/18 Band D equivalent for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council be £1,443.30.

5. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18 TO 2019/20**

Members commented on the major investment being made into the County Borough during this austere period.

RESOLVED: that the Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2019/20, as detailed in the circulated report, be approved and that the Programme be kept under review and updated as appropriate.

6. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY**

RESOLVED: That the Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, be approved in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003.

CHAIRPERSON