

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES/ CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)**

**Members Present:**

**22 November, 2017**

**Chairman:** Councillor **A.N.Woolcock**

**Vice Chairman:** Councillor **S.Rahaman**

**Councillors:** M.Crowley, C.Edwards, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, H.N.James, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, S.M.Penry and L.M.Purcell

**Officers In Attendance** S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, G.Nutt, A.Evans, Mrs.K.Jones, R.George and A.Manchipp

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors R.G.Jones, A.J.Taylor, D.W.Davies, D.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards and A.Wingrave

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### **1. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2018-19**

Committee noted the report of the Head of Financial Services on the proposed Council Tax Base for 2018-19. Members then raised the following:-

- In relation to the Council Tax collection rates, Members asked how the Authority proposed to maintain/increase its collection rates and were advised that Officers now used such methods as Facebook, the Department of Works and Pensions data, etc. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services was confident that the 2017/18 collection rates would be between 97.5% and 98%. Members were advised that with the introduction of the Universal Credit the process had become slightly more difficult, however Officers would do their utmost to maintain the collection rate.
- Members asked how many were paying Council Tax and were advised that in the region of 65k properties were liable to pay, some residents were however on full or partial benefit and were

not therefore liable for the full amounts. Over 99% of debt was collected, with the Authority being the second best in Wales for 2015/16 and the third best in Wales for 2016/17 with 98%.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet.

## 2. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REPORT 2017-18**

Members noted the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services on Treasury Management Mid Year Report for 2017-18. Committee noted that since the compilation of the report the Director of Finance and Corporate Services had authorised a further £20m borrowing at the lower interest rate.

- Members asked whether Officers took external financial advice on investments and were advised that the Authority's financial advisors were P.S. Asset Ltd (formerly CAPITA). Meetings were held 2 or three times per year with the advisors and regular daily updates were received.
- Members asked how long the Authority had been with P.S.Asset Ltd and were advised that the Council had been with the former CAPITA since at least 2002. In addition Members were told that the Authority paid around £10k per annum to the consultants with additional payments for any specific project work.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet.

## 3. **PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW 2018 - REVISED PROPOSALS**

Members received the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services in relation to the above and raised the following:-

- The impact on Wales seemed disproportionate to the rest of the UK;
- The proposed boundary changes would result in confusion as the proposed new parliamentary constituencies would not be

coterminous with the boundaries for the Local Health Board and regional working;

- Members hoped that any further representations made would be positively considered , although Members were reminded that the Boundary Commission was required to comply with the overriding rules of the electoral quota;
- Members were reminded that individuals and political parties could also make representations to the Boundary Commission.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the Council making further representations to the Boundary Commission and that the points set out in the report form the basis of the Council's submission.

**CHAIRMAN**