

POLICY AND RESOURCES/ CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

30 January, 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: C.Edwards, S.E.Freeguard, S.K.Hunt,
H.N.James, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, S.Paddison,
S.M.Penry and J.Warman

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

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors D.W.Davies, D.Jones, E.V.Latham
and P.D.Richards

1. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING FOR 2017/18

Committee received the report of the Corporate Directors' Group in relation to Revenue Budget Monitoring for 2017/18. Following presentation of the report, Members raised the following:-

- In relation to the savings identified in ELL 710 which related to innovative use of grant funding, has a savings target to be delivered. This saving was achieved by charging all relevant costs against the grant.
- ELL 706-the monitoring report shows a projected overspend of £75k and a projected ongoing shortfall in 2018/19 of £135k. This was due to a reduction in the number of beneficiaries and income potential to be generated over the remaining 15 months of the contract which ended on 31 March 2019.
- In relation to Income Generation, Members expressed their support of the initiative and for the proposed increase in the reserves position to £550k. In particular the use of funds to increase the capacity to generate income at both Margam Park and the Princess Royal Theatre was supported however

Members asked whether this could be extended to include the Cefn Coed Museum and the Gnoll Park. Concern was expressed that there had been no improvement works carried out at the Gnoll Park for some considerable time and that this was a popular site with local schools. The Director advised that the Friends of Cefn Coed had commissioned work from Swansea University to develop an action plan for the Cefn Coed Museum by April. The Chief Executive gave the meeting an update in relation to the work of the Income Generation Working Group, which was still ongoing. It was also important to keep in mind that the Authority should not compete against local businesses.

- With regard to the need for variances, Members were advised that in some areas expenditure could increase or decrease throughout the year and there was a need to be able to vary the budget to reflect this.
- Members discussed the £10k cut to Cefn Coed's budget proposed for 2018/19 and the need for income generation projects to mitigate this.
- Members asked for details around school cleaning and which schools had SLA's with the Authority. Officers advised that all Primary Schools, Special Schools and Bae Baglan used the Authority's cleaning service and that the Secondary Schools procured the service externally. In relation to the charge for the service it was noted that it was not on a full cost recovery basis, however Officers were working towards achieving this in due course. Should further schools opt out it could result in the redundancies and Members asked whether it was possible to encourage more schools to opt in? Discussions were taking place with secondary schools in relation to this. The issue around liability was also discussed wherein it was noted that this would lie with the Authority, where it provided the service.
- The overspend of £70k in Democratic Services was raised and it was noted that this was due, in the main, to the total Member costs increasing following the Local Government elections in May 2017 and to the subscription to the Local Government Association.
- The cost to the Authority of Auto Enrolment in the Pension was also noted.
- In relation to tourism Members were advised that dialogue was to be initiated with relevant partners such as Visit Wales, the Welsh Tourist Board and local businesses to realise some of the income generating possibilities surrounding major events such as golf, rugby, etc.

- Members asked for the reasons surrounding the over spend in recycling and were advised that this was due to people outside the County Borough area using the facilities. Members suggested that those using the facilities should provide evidence that they were Council Tax payers in the area.
- Members asked whether consideration could be given to using recycling as an income generation project.
- In relation to the over spend in Planning, this was due to the low number of applications being received by the Authority.

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

2. **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18**

Members considered the report of the Head of Financial Services in relation to the Capital Budget Monitoring for 2017/18. Members were pleased with the regeneration work carried out throughout the County Borough and noted the need to transfer resources between different financial years in line with spend profile.

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

CHAIRMAN