

EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

16 January 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.Mizen

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.apDafydd, S.Harris, J.Jones, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, R.Phillips, M.Protheroe, A.J.Richards, D.Whitelock and J.Hale

Officers In Attendance C.Millis and A.Thomas, S.Curran and J.Woodman-Ralph

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees and C.Clement-Williams

1. **CONSULTATION ON EDUCATION, LEISURE AND LIFELONG LEARNING BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS 2020/21**

An overview was received on the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Budget and Draft Savings 2020/2021, as detailed in the circulated report.

It was explained that the budget before members today was a positive budget compared to previous years, but that the council still had to make savings of £2.148 million to ensure there was a balanced budget for 2020/2021.

Members raised the following points:

- Budget Line ELLL 1003 – Cleaning Services (Schools)
Members were concerned at the impact on school budgets if this cost was to transfer to schools and the impact this might have on the current excellent standard of cleanliness within schools, if schools had to save money to meet this additional budget pressure. Officers explained that savings still had to be made and that it would be an extra pressure on school budgets

but that it could be absorbed by schools. The current cleaning service had received many compliments for the standard of cleanliness and schools understood the need of this standard to continue.

Members asked that officers consider phasing the transfer of cleaning costs to schools over a 3 years period.

- Budget Line ELLL1004 – School Transport – Out of County
Members asked how officers could forecast that there would be a reduction in the need for transportation to special schools out of county. Officers explained that the forecast was based on the current numbers of children in out of county placements who would reach the age of 19 in July 2020 whose placements would end.
- Budget Line ELLL 1001 – Leisure Trust
Members queried was this saving achievable. Officers confirmed that discussions were currently taking place with the provider to maximise their income which would result in a reduction of the subsidy.
- Budget Line ELLL 707 – Pontardawe Arts Centre
Members asked whether the projected income from the Cinema project at the centre was feasible to result in a reduction in subsidy. Officers confirmed that the increased income from establishing the cinema which was scheduled to open in January 2021 would be able to allow the subsidy to reduce. In addition, a capital investment had been agreed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, with a further investment being sought from the Arts Council for Wales and the Friends of Pontardawe Arts Centre to support the development.

Members asked that officers consider reducing the subsidy to the Arts Centre over a 3 year period rather than 2 years as detailed in the circulated report.

The committee was pleased that the work previously undertaken to strengthen the Library Service had resulted in a sustainable service going forward.

Members asked that the officers ensure that the points raised today be included in the consultation on the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Budget and Draft Savings 2020/2021.

CHAIRPERSON