

COUNCIL

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

9 March 2021

The Mayor: Councillor S.Jones

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor J.Warman

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, S.Bamsey, D.Cawsey, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, A.P.H.Davies, N.J.E.Davies, O.S.Davies, R.Davies, C.Edwards, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, S.Harris, M.Harvey, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, C.James, H.N.James, C.J.Jones, D.Jones, H.Jones, J.Jones, L.Jones, D.Keogh, E.V.Latham, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer, A.McGrath, J.Miller, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, *S.Paddison*, *S.M.Penry*, *D.M.Peters*, *R.Phillips*, *M.Protheroe*, L.M.Purcell, S.Pursey, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, A.J.Richards, P.D.Richards, M.Spooner, A.J.Taylor, R.L.Taylor, D.Whitelock, C.Williams, A.Wingrave, R.W.Wood and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: K.Jones, A.Evans, A.Jarrett, H.Jenkins, N.Pearce, C.Griffiths, H.Jones, M.Shaw, S.Curran and J.Woodman-Ralph

1. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor was pleased to announce the following nominations for the St David Awards from Neath Port Talbot:

Ethan Hutchings, from Port Talbot who rescued a drowning man from a river in Cwmavan, Port Talbot, who had been nominated for a Young Person Award.

Angharad Paget-Jones, a disability rights campaigner from Port Talbot was nominated for a Humanitarian Award.

Also, John Puzey from Pontardawe was nominated for a Humanitarian Award for his work as a prominent housing campaigner and as director of Shelter Cymru Wales for more than 30 years until his retirement in October 2020.

Council also congratulated the five members of Neath Port Talbot's Youth Council who took part in a mock election, hosted by the Senedd as part of the Vote 16 week. They won 41% of the total vote for their party "Equal Wales". The five young people involved were Stella Orrin (St Joseph's Catholic School and Sixth Form Centre), Isabel Williams (Cwmtawe Community School), Lola Thair (Cwmtawe Community School), Bonnie Connor (Cwm Brombil) and Bethan Nicholas-Thomas (Cwmtawe Community School).

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following Member made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

Councillor M.Harvey: Re: Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/2022 to 2023/2024 and the Revenue Budget 2021/2022 as he works for South Wales Police.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting/s of Council (Civic Year 2020/2021)**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of Council held on the 27 January 2021 be confirmed as accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Capital Programme Monitoring Report 2020/2021**

Cllr. C.Clement-Williams, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which had been commended to Council from Cabinet on the 8th March 2021.

Members queried why the monies for the Cefn Coed Valley Landscape Park had been reduced as stated in the circulated report.

It was explained that the £1.8 million (European Funding) could not be claimed due to technical difficulties and the work had not been completed by the end of March 2021. As a result the £1.8 million was utilized by Welsh Government for other projects. The monies set aside by the Council as part of the match funding requirement was incorporated into the Capital Programme monies. It was also advised that a meeting with local members has been arranged for April to look at future funding options and proposals and in the event that any match funding was required it would be looked at within the Capital Programme.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the 2020/2021 budget totalling £65.387m be approved.
 2. That the £39.1m of expenditure as at 31st January 2021 be noted.

5. **Budget Update and Monitoring Report 2020/2021**

Councillor C. Clement-Williams, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which had been commended to Council from Cabinet held on the 8th March 2021.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the reserve movements as detailed in the circulated report be approved.
 2. That the budget virements exceeding £500k as detailed in the circulated report be approved.
 3. That the operational and financial issues as detailed in the circulated report be noted.
 4. That work continues with Welsh Government and in line with legislation, regulations and directions to deliver services during these challenging times.
 5. That the additional grants received be noted.

6. That work continues to seek additional funding from Welsh Government to cover COVID 19 consequences.

6. **Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/2022 to 2023/2024**

Councillor C. Clement-Williams, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which had been commended to Council by Cabinet held on the 8th March 2021.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Capital Strategy be approved.
2. That the Capital Programme for 2021/2022 to 2023/2024 as detailed in the circulated report be approved.
3. That the Programme be kept under review and updated over the coming year.

7. **Revenue Budget 2021/2022**

Councillor C. Clement-Williams, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which had been commended to Council from Cabinet on the 8th March 2021. It was highlighted that 1,069 responses, 2 letters and a petition had been received to the public consultation on the budget and asked Council to support the recommendations contained within the report.

Members thanked officers and the Cabinet for the work that had been undertaken in achieving the budget position here before Council today especially that there were no new cuts to services being proposed for 2021/2022.

Concern was expressed by some Members at the impact that the 2.75% increase in Council Tax would have on residents/taxpayers. It was acknowledged that in the public consultation the proposed Council Tax rise was 3.75% but having listened to the responses the final proposal was reduced to 2.75%. It was highlighted that Neath Port Talbot Council was still one of the highest council tax in Wales.

Officers explained that the reduction from the original increase in Council Tax of 3.75% to 2.75% was as a result of additional monies received from Welsh Government in the final settlement figure together with the reimbursement of Covid 19 costs and loss of income in 2020/2021 and Welsh Government Funds provided for 2021/2022.

Discussion took place on the proposal put forward that reserves be used to enable the council tax to have no increase in Council Tax for this year 2021/2022 in order to mitigate the impact on families and communities within Neath Port Talbot.

Officers explained that the impact of taking the additional monies to allow for a nil increase in Council Tax would impact on the budget for 2022/2023 as the Council has to have a sustainable budget going forward for the next five years.

Further discussion took place on how Neath Port Talbot compares with other councils and the different types of reserves that they retain and what services are received.

The Cabinet Member for Finance responded and stated that every year consideration is given to try to reduce the level of Council Tax and that over the last 4 years the Council had the second lowest increase in Wales. It was highlighted that any further monies taken from reserves would have to be identified as savings from other services to replenish reserves to enable the Council to respond to unplanned emergencies and the ongoing impact of the pandemic. In addition, Council Tax was highlighted in the public consultation, as a result, it was reduced by 1% from 3.75% to 2.75% after the settlement figure from Welsh Government was received. The impact of reducing Council Tax increase to nil would result in reductions in services or staff in the 2022/2023 budget.

An amendment was put to Council and there followed a request for a recorded vote, on the following amendment, which received the requisite support in accordance with the requirements of Section 14.5 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution – Rules of Procedure.

That the 2021/2022 Band D equivalent for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will be £1,615.59 resulting in no increase in Council Tax as opposed to 2.75% increase as detailed in the report with the gap of 2.75% being funded from the general reserve (representing an additional sum of £2.14m be taken for 2021/2022). Therefore, the total amount of general reserves needed to balance the budget is

£5.24m i.e. £3.1m per original report) plus £2.14m. The resulting general reserves balance would be £14.72m which is 4.69% of the revenue budget.

For the Amendment:

Councillors: S.Bamsey, H.C.Clarke, R.Davies, C.Edwards, J.Evans, W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, N.T.Hunt, H.Jones, A.Llewelyn, D.M.Peters, R.Phillips, L.M.Purcell, A.J.Richards, M.Spooner and C.Williams

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: A.Aubrey, D.Cawsey, C.Clement-Williams, C.M.Crowley, A.P.H.Davies, N.E.Davies, O.S.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galworthy, S.Harris, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, C.James, H.N.James, C.J.Jones, D.Jones, J.Jones, L.C.Jones, D.Keogh, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, A.McGrath, J.Miller, S.Miller, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, M.Protheroe, S.M.Pursey, S.Rahaman, P.A Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor, R.L.Taylor, J. Warman, D.Whitelock, A. Wingrave, R.W.Wood, A.N.Woolcock.

Abstention:

Councillor: S.Jones

As a result of the above the amendment fell and there followed a request for a recorded vote, on the substantive recommendation contained in the circulated report, which received the requisite support in accordance with the requirements of Section 14.5 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution – Rules of Procedure.

For the Recommendation:

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, D.Cawsey, C.Clement-Williams, C.M.Crowley, A.P.H.Davies, O.S.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, S.Harris, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, C.James, H.N.James, C.J.Jones, D.Jones, L.C.Jones, D.Keogh, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, A.McGrath, J.Miller, S.Miller, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, M.Protheroe, S.M.Purse, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor, R.L.Taylor, J. Warman, D.Whitelock, A.Wingrave, R.W.Wood and A.N.Woolcock.

Against the Recommendation:

Councillors: S.Bamsey, H.C.Clarke, R.Davies, C.Edwards, J.Evans, W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, N.T.Hunt, H.Jones, A. Llewelyn, D.M.Peters, R.Phillips. L.M.Purcell, A.J.Richards, M.Spooner and C.Williams.

Abstention:

Councillors: N.E.Davies, J.Jones and S.Jones

RESOLVED: Having given due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment as detailed in Appendix 7 to the circulated report:

a) The following matters be delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Council Leader, relevant Cabinet Member and Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee:-

- Fees and Charges applicable for the financial year 2021/2022
- Fees and Charges which are applicable in any subsequent financial year and which, in the opinion of the relevant Corporate Director, need to be set in

advance of the financial year for operational reasons.

- b) That the revised budget position and arrangements for 2020/2021 be approved.
- c) Having taken into account the Integrated Impact Assessment and Crime and Disorder Impacts the Net Revenue Budget requirement for 2021/2022, and the service plans for the delivery of the budgets be approved.
- d) That the Budget/Forward Financial Plan savings be approved.
- e) That Corporate Directors be instructed to progress the savings and improvement programme for the Authority.
- f) Fees and charges for Non-Executive functions 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 2021/2022.
 - 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.
- g) That the Council Tax 2021/2022 Band D equivalent for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will be £1,660.02.

8. **Treasury Management Strategy 2021/2022**

RESOLVED: That the following Strategies and Policies as set out in the circulated report, be adopted:

- Treasure Management Strategy
- Annual Investment Strategy
- Minimum Revenue Provision Policy
- Prudential Indicators

9. **Council Tax Report 2021/2022**

- RESOLVED:**
- a) That any expenses incurred by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council in performing in part of its area, a function performed by a Community Council, elsewhere in its area, are treated as the Authorities general expenses.
 - b) That the levy of the Swansea Bay Port Health Authority be treated as a general expense.
 - c) That the following amounts calculated in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 be approved.

	Amount
Aggregate of the items estimated under Section 32 (2) – expenditure.	£464,543,174
Aggregate of the items estimated under Section 32(3) – income.	£145,966,043
Amount calculated in accordance with Section 32(4) – budget requirement.	£318,577,131
Aggregate payable in respect of redistributed NNDR and RSG, reduced in accordance with Section 33(3B0 of the Act.	£236,293,345

Basic amount of Council Tax in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act.	£1,708.43
Aggregate of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.	£2,331,482
Basic Amount of Council Tax for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act.	£1,660.02
Basic amounts of Council tax for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items bands relates, calculated in accordance with section 34(3) of the Act.	As detailed in Appendix 1 to the circulated report.
Amounts to be taken into account in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation, calculated in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act.	As detailed in Appendix 2 to the circulated report.

d) That the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales has stated the following amounts in a precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act.

Band A	£191.81
Band B	£223.78
Band C	£255.75
Band D	£287.72
Band E	£351.66
Band F	£415.60
Band G	£479.53
Band H	£575.44
Band I	£671.35

The total precept payable is £13,857,591.

- e) That having calculated the aggregate in each case above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act hereby sets the amounts shown in Appendix 3 to the circulated report as the Council Tax for 2021/2022 for each of the categories of dwelling shown.

CHAIRPERSON