

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

1 August, 2018

Chairman: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairman: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey, H.N.James,
J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry,
L.M.Purcell and A.L.Thomas

Officers In Attendance A.Evans, G.Nutt, S.John, D.Rees, C.Griffiths,
K.Jones and A.Manchipp

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.W.Davies,
D.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees,
P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor and A.Wingrave

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The following Member made declarations of interest:-

Cllr.M.Harvey Re: Agenda Item No 12 of the
Cabinet Agenda on the Revenue
Budget Monitoring as it relates to
CCTV as he is employed by South
Wales Police.

Cllr.M.Harvey Re: Agenda Item No 5 of the
Cabinet (Finance) Sub Committee
on Miscellaneous Grant
Applications as it refers to Skewen
R.F.C. as he is a Season Ticket
Holder.

2. **CLLR.A.THOMAS**

The Committee congratulated Cllr. Alex Thomas on recently being called to the bar.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Noted.

4. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION STRATEGY IN NEATH PORT TALBOT**

Committee considered the report of the Task and Finish Group on the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy in Neath Port Talbot. The Task and Finish Group also thanked the Officers for their contribution.

The Members of the Task and Finish Group stressed that none of the recommendations contained in the report would require additional funding.

Members asked that alternative ways of promoting the Welsh Language be considered going forward.

Following scrutiny, the Committee commended the report to Cabinet for approval, and requested that Cabinet commend the same to Council for adoption.

5. **CABINET AGENDA FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet items:

Cabinet Proposals

5.1 Treasury Management Monitoring 2018-2019

Committee noted that going forward the above report would be presented to Committee at the same time as both the Revenue and Capital Monitoring reports.

Members noted that the Authority had taken advantage of a dip in interest rates on long term borrowing and had borrowed £10m.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5.2 Capital Budget Monitoring 2018-2019

Committee received the above report and noted that the figures within the report fluctuated throughout the year due to grants received etc.

It was noted that the report was also monitored by the Capital Programme Steering Group.

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

5.3 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2018-2019

Members expressed concern at the current projected overspend of £1.658m and were advised that work would continue throughout the remainder of the financial year to reduce the projected overspend. Directorate budgets were monitored closely on a monthly basis by management teams, which looked particularly at any projected overspends. Virements or reserve movements may be needed in some cases to off-set any projected overspends.

Members then raised the following:-

Children Residential Care – The average cost of a residential package was £190k. Members asked whether these packages could be provided in house and were advised that due to the complexity of the child's needs in these cases it would not be possible, although some Local Authorities were exploring the possibility.

The projected overspends in Social Services would be discussed by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on 2 August, however the impact of the decision by ABMu to cut the number of hospital beds would have a detrimental effect on the service provided as service users were sometimes already waiting for packages of care before hospital discharge. While the demand for care packages was increasing, Officers would be reviewing each care package to ensure that the correct level of support was being provided, this may increase or decrease, depending on each service user's

needs. Members asked that this be further discussed at the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

Concern was expressed at the £2.5m projected savings in relation to Domiciliary Care, which was at present showing £1.267m overspend. How would this impact on next year's budget?

It was noted that the Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee had responded to the ABMu's consultation on cutting the number of beds and that ABMu would be invited to a meeting of Council to further discuss its proposals.

Members asked why virements were being considered so early in the financial year and were advised that it was Officers' recommendation to deal with over/under spends at an early stage.

In relation to the projected overspends on recycling, Members were reminded that decisions had recently been taken on changes to the Waste Strategy to mitigate some of the costs. As part of these changes out of county waste would be looked at and operatives given the authority to check the contents of black bags etc. to ascertain whether these were from the County Borough.

Members asked if the £10m Pupil Development Grant was contained in the delegated budget and were advised that it was administered by Pembrokeshire County Council and was based on the previous year's class numbers. The grant was then passed to the Authority and passported directly to schools. It was agreed that a Strategy would be developed and that a report would be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committee. Challenge Advisors would also be involved in the process.

Following scrutiny the Committee were supportive of the proposals contained in the circulated report subject to:-

The review of Care Packages being discussed in relevant Scrutiny Committee;

A Strategy being developed on the Pupil Development Grant;
AMBu being invited to attend Council to discuss its proposed bed closures.

6. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 18/19**

Members agreed to look in more depth at the amber budget areas.

7. **URGENT ITEMS**

Committee referred to the retirement of the Head of Finance, David Rees, and noted that this was the last meeting he would be attending. Committee thanked Mr Rees for the help and assistance he had provided to Members both during Committee meetings and outside of meetings and wished him a long and happy retirement.

CHAIRMAN

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