

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

29 January 2020

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, S.A.Knoyle, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.M.Penry, S.H.Reynolds and A.N.Woolcock

Officers In Attendance H.Jenkins, S.Phillips, C.Griffiths, S.Morris, S.Curran, C.Furlow-Harris, H.Jones, K.Jones and S.Rees

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones and A.R.Lockyer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Cllr S.M Penry: Re: Item 2 of the Cabinet papers re Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings Proposals, as she is a Board Member of CVS and Age Connect.

Cllr Saifur Rahaman: Re: Item 2 of the Cabinet papers re Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings Proposals, as he is secretary of NPT BME Community Association who receive grant funding from NPTCBC.

Cllr Sonia Reynolds: Re: Item 2 of the Cabinet papers re Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings Proposals, as she is a trustee of Canolfan Maerdy.

Cllr Arwyn Woolcock: Re: Item 2 of the Cabinet papers re Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings Proposals, as his niece is a Training and Development Support Manager in the HR division.

2. **CONSULTATION ON CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS 2020/21**

An overview was received on the Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings 2020/2021, as detailed in the circulated report.

Policy and Democratic Services.

Members were reminded that the budget savings in the Policy and Democratic Services division had been agreed in the 2019/20 budget and no new proposals were included. The committee asked for a progress update and were pleased to note that officers were confident that the savings would be delivered and were in progress. There had been a slight delay in implementing the savings identified in CORP903 due to the problems experienced with the implementation of the online bus pass applications by Welsh Government and a revised plan will be reported back to Cabinet in early 2020. Members were pleased to note there had been no further surges in demand for bus pass renewal but stated their disappointment that incorrect information had been provided by Transport for Wales in relation to bus pass renewal and praised the Council staff for how they had dealt with the situation.

The committee noted that in relation to CORP905 market testing was currently ongoing to check demand and income assumptions in relation to CCTV and that the business case for a revised service would be brought to Cabinet later in the year. It was noted that there is a significant benefit to the criminal justice system from CCTV and that discussions were ongoing with South Wales Police in relation to their financial contribution to the service.

Legal Services.

The committee commented on the staff reductions in CORP 1001/1002/1003 in that the Council is having to do more with less people as resources continue to reduce. Members were concerned

that as the pressure on staff increases, rates of stress related sickness absence could rise.

Members asked if there was an option for income generation by hiring out the Council's legal expertise. It was explained that there are legal rules that we must comply with and which specify who we can do work for and also Law Society rules and limits and due to issues of conflict the ability to do so was limited.

Human Resources.

Members noted that in relation to CORP1007/1008 digital technology has led to reduced demand for transactional role requirements.

A discussion was held on the role of seconded Trade Union Officers. It was stated that there is a legal obligation to allow reasonable time off for Trade Union duties and with a workforce the size of the Council it is more practicable to have seconded officers. Members recognised the social partnership relationship with the Unions and agreed that the investment in these roles is valid.

Members queried the HR presence in schools and were assured that the service is provided in schools to the level required.

Finance.

Members queried the £190k saving identified in CORP1006 for staffing reductions and asked for further information. It was explained that this equated to 3 posts which had been vacant for 18 months together with a further 2 voluntary redundancies that will happen in 2020/21 and the decision had been made to remove the posts permanently from the staffing structure.

Central Savings.

Members were assured that the Capital Programme can be delivered effectively by removing the 500k as stated in OTH1001 with no impact to service or delivery.

Following consideration of the Integrated Impact Assessments included within the report, Members were reminded that their comments from this meeting would form part of the formal consultation response for the Budget 2020/21. They were asked that

if they had any other proposals for budget savings not included within the attached report that they approach officers for their consideration.

CHAIRPERSON