

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

5 March 2020

Chairperson: Councillor M.Harvey

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: S.E.Freeguard, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt,
S.A.Knoyle, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan,
S.Paddison, L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry,
S.H.Reynolds and A.N.Woolcock

Officers In Attendance: S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, N.Pearce, K.Jones,
C.Griffiths, H.Jones, A.Thomas, D.Giles,
C.Cole, C.Davies and T.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones,
L.Jones, R.G.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer,
P.A.Rees and P.D.Richards

1. Declarations of Interests

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

Councillor S.Freeguard Re Cabinet reports - Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Revenue Budget 2020/21, as she is a Member of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor M.Harvey Re Cabinet reports - Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23, Revenue Budget 2020/21 and Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy, and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

2020/21, as he is an employee of South Wales Police.

Councillor A.Llewelyn Re Cabinet reports - Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Revenue Budget 2020/21, as he is a Member of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor A.Woolcock Re Cabinet reports - Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Revenue Budget 2020/21, as he is a Member of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

2. **Customer Services - Performance**

The Customer Services report was discussed, including queries around pest control. Members noted requests were seasonal – for example, wasps and rats queries were likely to increase as the weather warmed up.

The possibility of the responsibility for issuing bus passes being passed back to local authorities from Transport for Wales, was discussed. It was noted that a new database was now in place which should make the process smoother, but officers were supportive of the practise remaining with Transport for Wales.

Members noted that joint working with third sector partners was key to providing support to people who were not able to travel into urban centres to access services.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

3. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

The committee scrutinised the following cabinet items:

Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23

The possibility of extra capital investment from the Welsh Government, following the impact of the recent weather events was discussed. Over £1 million of work within Neath Port Talbot had been

identified as being needed immediately, with a further £3 million going forward. Officers were currently waiting for a funding decision from Welsh Government. National discussions were also ongoing.

It was noted that discussions were ongoing with Natural Resources Wales regarding the recent flooding and remedial measures. Extra funding from Welsh Government would not be part of the capital funding in next year's settlement.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet.

Revenue Budget 2020/21

Members noted the proposed 3.79% rise in council tax, which had been reduced from the proposed 5%, following views from local residents during the budget consultation. Although the majority of members were in agreement with the proposal, some members indicated that they would be proposing amendments at Council, as they still felt the increase was too high.

Officers explained how important it was to have reserves in current times of financial uncertainty.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet.

4. Forward Work Programme 2019/20

The committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2019/2020.

CHAIRPERSON

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