



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 14 February 2019 at 10.30 am at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor M Norris	Councillor J Rosser
Councillor R Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Jones, Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr C Hanagan, Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services
Mr C Lee, Group Director Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Gale, Service Director, Planning
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

117 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

118 MINUTES

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 24th January 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

119 COUNCIL FEES & CHARGES POLICY 2019/20

The Director, Financial Services provided the Cabinet with a report, setting out the proposed revisions to Council fees and charges levels for the financial year 2019/20, all to be effective from 1st April 2019 or as soon as is practicable thereafter

The Director, Financial Services reported on the results of the review undertaken by Cabinet in respect of the Councils proposed fees and Charges for the 2019/20 financial year, highlighting the reviews objective of continuing to

provide a comprehensive range of quality services at affordable prices.

Members were advised that the outcome of the review was a proposed 2.90% standard increase to fees and charges (allowing for rounding adjustments as appropriate) with the exception of a number of areas that were proposed to be subject to specific treatment. The Director referred members to table 1, set out in section 5 of his report which provided a Summary of the proposed fees and charges not subject to the proposed standard increase.

Members were advised of the details in respect of Meals on Wheels, Day Centre Meals, and Houses in Multiple Occupation. The Director advised that the total estimated income that would be generated by the proposals outlined within the report would be £42k in a full year. Before concluding his report the Director also referenced previous Cabinet decisions approved in relation to fees and charges during the 2018/19 financial year which would be incorporated into the Council's 2019/20 proposed Budget Strategy.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Officers for the report and commented on the proposed 2.90% standard increase to fees and charges, which he commented was a reasonable amount. The Leader commented on the freezing of charges as highlighted within the report, following consideration of the feedback received from the Budget consultation process.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the freeze to school meals and also spoke of the rationale for the proposed schedule of fees in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation, referencing the regulation and enforcement schemes in place in relation to HMOs needed to be undertaken by the Authority.

Other Members also spoke positively on the proposed charges for HMOs commenting on the need to ensure that the young people within the County Borough were given the highest standard of accommodation, with the Council ensuring health and safety for the students and their wellbeing was catered for by the respective landlords. Reference was also made to the Treforest Property Accreditation Scheme, where properties within this accreditation would receive a 10% reduction.

Following discussions it was **AGREED:**

1. To approve the proposed revised levels for all areas of the Council's fees and charges as set out at section 5 of the report and detailed at Appendix 1 of the report.
2. To build the net budgetary impact (£42K for 2019/20) into the budget strategy proposals for consideration by Cabinet and Council as appropriate.
3. To note the fees and charges decisions already approved and included in the 2019/20 proposed budget strategy (as outlined in paragraph 5.5 of the report)

120 THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 - 2021/22

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services provided the Cabinet

with a report outlining the Council's three year Capital Programme for 2019/20 – 2021/22 which if agreed, would be presented to Council on 6th March, 2019.

Cabinet Members were referred to Appendix A of the report, where the draft three year Capital Programme was outlined.

The Group Director explained that the core programme had been maintained at £15.934M per year and that the three year capital programme presented was fully funded. A risk remained that the projected capital receipts would be less than anticipated but it was assured that capital receipts projections would continue to be closely monitored. The Group Director continued to advise that the proposed capital programme for 2019/20 to 2021/22 represented a total investment of £173.202M and continued to provide detail of this investment.

Cabinet Members were referred to section 5 of the report, where the additional investment and earmarked reserves were outlined. Section 5.3 highlighted the results of a detailed risk assessment of earmarked reserves and provided a view on the extent to which any amounts could be released. Members were advised that the total amount of reserves identified to be released amounts to £6.740M.

The Group Director referred Members to the table outlined in section 5.7 which identified the specific areas where investment is proposed, as in accordance with the overarching objectives and aims of the Corporate plan:

- Highways & Roads
- Highway Structures
- Park Structures
- Making Better Use/Traffic Developments
- A4119 Dualling
- Land Drainage
- Bryn Pica Eco Park
- Empty Property Grants
- Town Centre Maintenance Grants (revenue project)
- Schools
- Extra Care
- Parks
- Play Areas
- Skate Parks / multi use Games Areas
- Cemeteries
- Leisure Centres Enhancements
- King George V Track

The Leader spoke positively on the proposed Capital investment which aligned with the priorities of the Councils Corporate plan, commenting on the potential for future grants to come forward following recent discussions with the First Minister. The Leader commented on a number of new investment areas identified in the report, referencing Bryn Pica Eco Park and the investment to cemeteries, following a review of the service.

The Deputy Leader commented on austerity and the pressures facing the Council and many other Local Authorities across Wales, although she highlighted that that no other Local Authority was able to invest in key service areas like RCT and reiterated her thanks to the work of the Leader, Chief Executive, Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services and the finance officers involved.

Following discussions it was **AGREED:**

1. To propose the attached three year capital programme at Appendix A of the report to Council on the 6th March which includes:
 - I. A review and proposed release of earmarked reserve balances as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the report;
 - II. Proposed investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 5.7 of the report;
 - III. The Council's core capital programme;
 - IV. The Council's total capital programme including additional non core funding

121 THE COUNCIL'S 2019/20 REVENUE BUDGET

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services presented his report to Members which provided Cabinet with information in respect of the 2019/2020 local government settlement, the outcomes of the general budget consultation exercise and feedback from the pre-scrutiny activity undertaken by the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee, to assist with Cabinet's deliberations, prior to constructing the revenue budget strategy for the financial year ending 31st March 2020, which it needed to recommend to Council, for approval.

Members were referred to Appendix A of the report, which set out a proposed budget from the Council's Senior Leadership Team, following consideration of the local government settlement, which had been received on the 19th December 2018. The Group Director advised that the Senior Leadership Team discussion paper contained key elements of a balanced revenue budget strategy for 2019/2020.

Through his report, the Group Director was able to provide Members with details of the potential financial effects on Rhondda Cynon Taf and its Council Tax payers, including an exemplification of a high level budget requiring a Council Tax increase of 3.6%.

Reference was made to the Medium Term Financial planning and Service Transformation Reserve and the Group Director confirmed that the Council have

been able to increase the level of transitional funding available and the latest position is that this reserve has now increased to £4.840M (additional in year savings to date of £0.175M).

The Group Director advised of the recent base budget updates with specific reference to potential adjustment for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Levy and the additional costs of the firefighter pension fund, which if not funded by central government, could be subsequently passed on to constituent authorities. The Group Director advised that depending on the outcome of this decision the strategy report presented to Council would reflect the higher value for the levy.

Members attention was also drawn to the teachers pension which had not been included in the budget position as confirmation was still awaited on the quantum and timing of funding to cover the cost implications. It was added that if no confirmation is received prior to the final budget setting then an additional 'temporary' allocation would be made from transitional funding or other earmarked reserves to cover this and any impact from an amended Fire Service levy.

The Group Director concluded his report by drawing Member's attention to the Consultation process that had been undertaken in relation to the budget, with Members being advised that the consultation ran from the 5th November, 2018 to the 17th December, 2018 and engaged over 4000 people. The Group Director also referenced the Pre-scrutiny that had been undertaken in respect of the Budget.

The Leader spoke on the proposed budget strategy and commented on the positive position the Council were in due to prudent managing of the budget throughout the year, efficiency making and remodelling of services. The Leader added that Rhondda Cynon Taf's Council Tax would be one of the lowest in Wales, advising Members of recent Council Tax announcements in adjoining local authorities. The Leader highlighted that the proposed figure of 3.6% was lower than some of the suggested Council tax settings suggested by the public during the consultation process.

The Leader referenced the school budget uplift adding that due to the improved final settlement and the priority to support schools the Council were now proposing a £5.200M cash uplift. He also referenced the uncertainty with the teachers' pension and the Firefighters pension and stressed that the issues had been raised with Welsh Government.

The Deputy Leader also addressed her concerns in respect of the teachers' pension which had been highlighted at the recent meeting of the School Budget Forum. The Deputy Leader continued by speaking positively of the budget consultation process and the valuable feedback gained through the process and the opportunity for Cabinet to speak with residents of RCT on what services matter to them. The Deputy Leader also took the opportunity to thank the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee for the pre-scrutiny undertaken in respect of the budget strategy.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note that the procedures relating to revenue budget construction, the budget consultation process, and reporting to Council, are laid

down in the “Budget and Policy Framework”, contained within the Council’s Constitution.

2. To adopt the draft 2019/2020 revenue budget strategy, detailed in the Discussion Paper labelled ‘Appendix A’, as the basis of the revenue budget strategy for the financial year ending the 31st March 2020, that it would wish to recommend to Council, subject to consideration of the results of the general budget consultation exercise and feedback from pre scrutiny by the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee.
3. The draft timetable for setting the 2019/2020 revenue budget, reproduced at Appendix A2 of the report.
4. That the Council continues to support the medium term financial strategy aimed at maximising ongoing efficiency in service delivery, targeted service transformation and other changes that maintain the financial integrity of the Council whilst still aiming as much as possible to protect jobs and key services.
5. To authorise the Group Director for Corporate and Frontline Services to incorporate any further decision of Cabinet and Council, as appropriate, into the Budget Strategy with a consequential adjustment made to the use of transition funding.

122 N.B FOR INFORMATION: TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION FOR THE 2018-19 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Members noted the updated Leaders Scheme of Delegation for the 2018-19 Municipal Year in respect of the changes to:

- SACRE Membership change – County Borough Councillor M Fidler-Jones replacing County Borough Councillor M Griffiths
- Strategic Culture & Arts Steering Group – Amendments to the Terms of Reference
- Addition of the RCT Twinning Association Steering Group.

This meeting closed at 11.05 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**