

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 25th October, 2016 at 12:00pm at the Council Headquarters, Clydach Vale.

County Borough Councillors – Cabinet Members in attendance:-

A.Morgan (Chair)

M.Webber R.Bevan A.Crimmings

G. Hopkins E.Hanagan

Other County Borough Councillors in attendance

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw – Chief Executive

Mr C Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr C Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services

Mr G Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services

Mr N Wheeler – Director, Highways & Streetcare Services

Mrs J Cook – Director, Regeneration & Planning

Mr T Wilkins – Director, HR

Ms E Thomas - Temporary Director, Education & Lifelong Learning

Mr C Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations (Secretary to the Cabinet)

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors M Norris, J Rosser & M Forey

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

66 MINUTES

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 22nd September, 2016 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

67 SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Cabinet & Public Relations provided Members with the conclusions and recommendations of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee which conducted a review in respect of the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy. The officer explained that a Scrutiny Working Group was formed which met on four occasions to conduct a consultation review in respect of the office rationalisation strategy. Cabinet Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report where the three key areas reviewed were displayed:

- a. Council Accommodation Review
- b. Agile Working & Digitalisation
- c. RCT Together

The Cabinet Members spoke positively of the report and took the opportunity to thank the Working Group for their commendable work in conducting the review. It was agreed that the 3 areas identified would make more efficient use of the Council's office space, resulting in a reduction in accommodation costs.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the review provided by the Council's Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee provided in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. Agree in principle the recommendation contained within the report, subject to further consideration by the Cabinet Portfolio holders for this area, following which a detailed response is provided to the relevant Scrutiny Committees.

68 2017/18 BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Director, Cabinet & Public Relations advised Members of the proposed approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2017/18 budget. The officer explained that in previous years, the Council has undertaken a two year phase approach to budget consultation but due to the timing of the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review and the impact it had on the Welsh Government releasing provisional and final settlements for 2016/17, a revised, single phase approach was adopted for last year's budget consultation. Cabinet Members were reminded of the success of last year's consultation which led to more than 500 people providing feedback, with the officer proposing this approach for 2017/18.

The Deputy Leader spoke positively on the proposed approach, commenting on the importance of young people's opinions during consultation. The Member added that the introduction of town centre consultation was a successful method in meeting and communicating with people who would otherwise not have made their voices heard.

Following further discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the success of last year's revised approach to budget consultation
2. Endorse the proposed approach to budget consultation which will include:
 - The use of an online budget simulator
 - Town centre roadshow events
 - A young person's consultation event
 - Consultation with OPAG
 - Use of social media to promote and capture feedback
 - Community engagement.
3. Note that the budget consultation will run from November 7th 2016 – December 19th 2016.
4. Note that the Council's statutory requirements regarding consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax levels will be met via the proposed approach.
5. Inform the Chair Persons of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance and Performance Committee of the approach and the continuation a single continuous phase.

69 PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET SETTLEMENT 2017/18

The Director, Corporate & Frontline Services circulated a late report to the Cabinet Members, providing them with information in respect of the 2017/18 provisional Local Government Settlement, and initial comments on its likely implications for the delivery of Council services. The officer referred Cabinet Members to the presentation displayed to accompany the report, a copy of which is attached.

It was explained that the Public Sector continue to face a sustained period of financial challenge in terms of available resources but that setting a budget in 2017/18 that both maintains, as far as possible, key services and jobs as well as ensuring ongoing financial stability of the Council, remains a key priority.

Members welcomed the protection afforded to Local Government Funding by the Welsh Government

The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to thank the Director and the Finance team for their continuous hard work during times of austerity, reiterating the importance of the Council's key objective.

Questions were raised around Communities First and the impact Assembly decisions would have on the Council and staff.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the Provisional 2017/2018 Local Government Settlement, announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, on the 19th October 2016.
2. Note that the Final 2017/2018 Local Government Settlement is expected on the 21st December 2016.
3. Note that the general budget strategy consultation, subject to Cabinet approval, will commence on the 7th November 2016 and will close on the 19th December 2016.

This meeting closed at 12.20pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chair.**

The Revenue Budget 2017/18 – Provisional Settlement Update

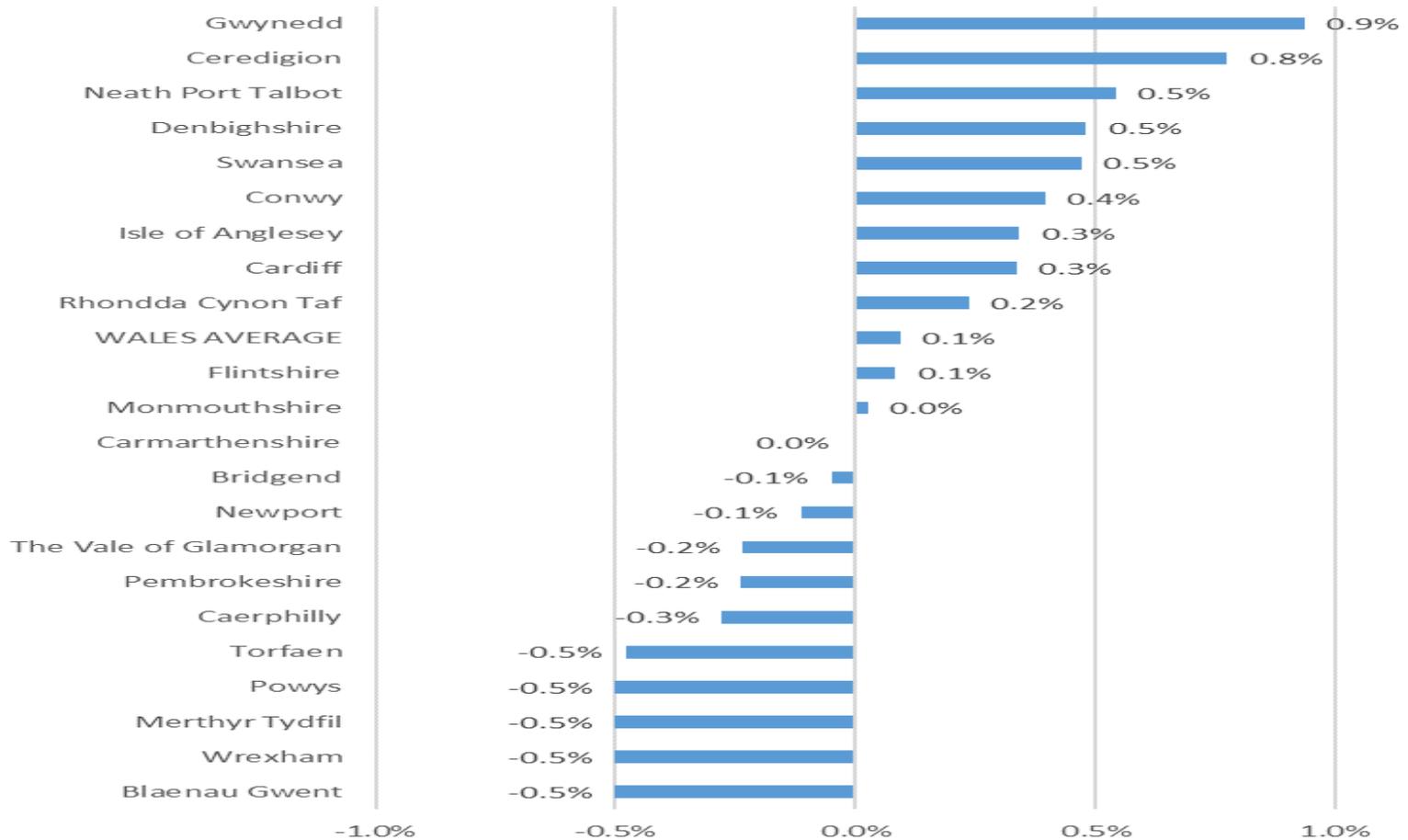
October 2016



Provisional Settlement Details

- Average reported increase across Wales 0.1% (after transfers, but not new responsibilities) for 2017/18
- Reported increase for Rhondda Cynon Taf - 0.2%
- Floor protection at -0.5%
- Various 'Transfers in' and 'out' of settlement
- New responsibilities added
- Many specific grant details to be confirmed
- Capital funding increase of 0.06% in 2017/18

Provisional Settlement Details



Preliminary Assessment

- Settlement better than anticipated and modelled within the MTFP
- Updated financial modelling, including:
 - Council Tax +2.5% increase
 - Schools +1.5%
- Initial budget gap reduced from £21.519M to £13.818M
- After savings secured to date and efficiency targets applied, gap is **£2.819M**
- Ongoing work in respect of expenditure and income critical as budget strategy is developed

Development Of An Equitable Budget Strategy

- Key principles applied to maintain our focus on robust financial management
- Considerations will include:
 - Financial stability
 - Efficient and effective services
 - Appropriate funding for corporate commitments, schools and services
 - Protect key services and jobs wherever possible
 - Review all areas



Consultation

- To run from 7th November to 19th December and include:
 - The use of an online budget simulator
 - Town Centre roadshow events
 - A young persons consultation event
 - Consultation with OPAG
 - Use of Social Media to promote and capture feedback
 - Community Engagement

Budget Timetable

- 19th October 2016 – Provisional settlement figures released by the Welsh Government
- 21st December 2016– Final figures expected from the Welsh Government
- October to February – options for next year's budget to be considered, including consultation process to be undertaken
- Feb / March 2017 – Council sets budget and Council Tax levels for 2017/18