

COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 3RD MARCH, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor K. Madge (Chair)

Councillors:

F. Akhtar	S.M. Allen	L.R. Bowen	K.V. Broom
C.A. Campbell	J.M. Charles	D.M. Cundy	S.A. Curry
W.R.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies	G. Davies	H.L. Davies
I.W. Davies	J.A. Davies	K.Davies	S.L. Davies
E. Dole	J.S. Edmunds	P.M. Edwards	L.D. Evans
R.E. Evans	W.T. Evans	A.L. Fox	S.J.G. Gilasbey
P. Hughes-Griffiths	T.M. Higgins	J.K. Howell	P.M. Hughes
J.D. James	R. James	D.M. Jenkins	G.H. John
C. Jones	B.W. Jones	D. Jones	G.R. Jones
H.I. Jones	A. Lenny	M.J.A. Lewis	S. Matthews
A.S.J. McPherson	E. Morgan	A.G. Morgan	S. Najmi
D. Nicholas	B.D.J. Phillips	D. Price	J.G. Prosser
B.A.L. Roberts	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	H.B. Shepardson	A.D.T. Speake
B. Thomas	D. Thomas	E.G. Thomas	G.B. Thomas
G. Thomas	J. Tremlett	A.Vaughan Owen	D.T. Williams
J.E. Williams	D.E. Williams		

Also Present:

W. Walters, Chief Executive
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
R. Mullen, Director of Environment
R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)
L Morris, Senior Press Officer
A Clarke, Lead Business Partner (HR)
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.A. Davies, D.C. Evans, H.A.L. Evans, A.D. Harries, C.J. Harris, A. James, J. P. Jenkins, K. Lloyd, J.S. Phillips, L.M. Stephens.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
L.R. Bowen	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Mother and wife work for the Authority
K. Broom	9 - Housing Revenue	Private Landlord

	Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21	
C.A. Campbell	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Brother and sister-in-law are teachers
Arwel Davies	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Sister-in Law is a Head of Service
I.W. Davies	9 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21	Private Landlord
J.A. Davies	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Son is a teacher
E. Dole	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Mother and daughter-in-law work for the Council
J.S. Edmunds	9 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21	Private Landlord
J.S. Edmunds	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Daughter works in Education
L.D. Evans	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Daughter is a Teacher
R. Evans	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Daughter works in the library service
S.J.G. Gilasbey	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Sister-in law works in Education
T.M. Higgins	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Sister –in-law and niece work in the library service
P. Hughes-Griffiths	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Daughter is a teacher
R. James	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Partner works for the library service
G. John	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Daughter works in Housing
A.C. Jones	9 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21	Private Landlord
B.W. Jones	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Son is a teacher in Carmarthenshire
G.R. Jones	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Wife works in Education Department
K. Madge	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Daughter works in Social Care

A.G. Morgan	9 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21	Tenant at Delta Lakes in Llanelli
D. Nicholas	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Daughter works in Planning
D. Price	9 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21	Private Landlord
G.B. Thomas	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Sister is a teacher
G.B. Thomas	9 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21	Private Landlord
A Vaughan-Owen	12 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Wife is a teacher

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Chair extended his congratulations to Mrs Mary Keir, a resident at Awel Tywi Home in Ffairfach, who was celebrating her 108th birthday today;
- The Chair stated that he had attended a visit by HRH The Princess Royal to the Corgi Hosiery factory in Ammanford;
- The Chair stated that he was saddened to hear of the passing of Kevin James from the Authority's Highways Department. Kevin had attended many Planning Committees and would be sadly missed. The Chair, on behalf of Elected Members and staff, extended his condolences to Kevin's family;
- The Chair stated that he and his Vice-Chair had attended several events on the Council's behalf during the last month, some of which were detailed on his blog on the Council's website;
- Councillor Arwel Davies, congratulated Menna Evans, from Llansadwrn, on becoming the fastest woman, a new Guinness World Record, to run the length of New Zealand, from Cape Reinga to Bluff [1280 miles]. Menna had completed the run in 36 days and had also raised money for the charity Mind;
- The Leader made a brief statement on the Coronavirus stating that Wales was well prepared and testing was being offered .

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

5. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions from Members had been received.

6. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ALUN LENNY

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Alun Lenny:-

“Climate Change urgency - Sound scientific evidence attributes warmer temperatures and changes to the paths of storms across the north Atlantic to climate change. As a consequence, Carmarthenshire and other parts of Wales and the UK have suffered severe flooding for the second time in 16 months. It is both timely and ironic that the recent floods happened just days after Carmarthenshire County Council voted to implement its radical policy to become net zero carbon by 2030 – the first authority in Wales to do so.

This council notes, with dismay, that both the Welsh and UK Governments have set 2050 as a target date to be net zero carbon. We call on both governments to follow this authority’s lead and recognise the need to act with greater urgency by bringing forward their target dates.”

The Motion was duly seconded.

The proposer and seconder of the Motion were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Motion.

A number of statements were made in support of the motion.

RESOLVED that the Motion be supported.

7. EXECUTIVE BOARD RECOMMENDATION - REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2020/21 TO 2022/23

Council was informed that the Executive Board, at its meeting held on the 24th February, 2020 (Minute 6 refers) had considered the revenue Budget Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 and had made a number of recommendations, as detailed within the report of the Director of Corporate Services, for Council’s consideration.

Council received a presentation by the Executive Board Member for Resources, on behalf of the Executive Board, in which he set out the background to the budget proposals being presented to the Council for consideration.

The Executive Board Member for Resources stated that the report brought together the latest position on the budget proposals and the Executive Board recommendations on concluding the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 to 2022/23. He added that the Welsh Government’s final settlement had not been published until the day after Executive Board had met to consider the final budget, and the final Welsh Government budget was still to be debated in the Senedd. The changes made by Welsh Government to the settlement had been amendments to specific grants only, and therefore core funding remained the same as the details included within the report, the headline being an increase of 4.3% on all Wales basis, with Carmarthenshire receiving 4.4%. This reflects to some extent Welsh Government’s recognition of the unprecedented level of inflationary and

unavoidable pressures facing local authorities. However, this did not detract from the fact that savings are still required despite the welcomed funding increase.

The Executive Board Member for Resources stated that updated information in respect of grants and assumptions had provided additional funding when compared to the provisional budget agreed by the Executive Board on 6th January 2020. This meant that some of the proposals within the original Budget outline had been revisited and further options considered.

He commented that local authority finances remained challenging and it continued to be hard to plan as Welsh Government again had only been able to provide figures at Authority level for one year. The Westminster Comprehensive Spending Review had, in effect, been fast tracked, with a fuller, multi-year review now expected to be undertaken in 2020.

He advised that some adjustments had been made by the Director to some of the other figures within the strategy which was part of the normal routine as clearer and more information became available. The current total validation added some £11.8m on to the budget excluding Teachers Pensions costs. The most significant validation this year remained pay, however the report highlighted the high level of uncertainty given the gap between the two sides currently in negotiation. In the absence of any greater clarity, the budget allowed for a 2.75% increase. This pay offer did not apply to teachers who were covered by separate national pay arrangements. The September 2019 award had been set at 2.75% and this level was assumed for future years, though it was also recognised as a key risk to the budget.

The Executive Board Member advised that the budget proposals consulted upon in January 2020 had assumed a full validation of pay and inflationary pressures to schools, therefore, as updated information was available on increased pressures, a further £311,000 had been added, taking the overall increase in schools delegated budgets to £10.1 million. This, it was considered, demonstrated significant support to schools, which was greater than that given to other departments and provided schools with the same spending power as the current year.

In spite of the additional pressure necessitated by the compressed budget timetable, the Executive Board Member deemed this year's consultation process a great success with more than 2,000 responses. It had again been wide and varied using the following mixed methods of approach to ascertain the views on the budget: Member Seminars; Scrutiny Committees; School Budget Forum; On-line surveys; Town and Community Council meetings; Trade union meetings; Schools Insight Session. A full appraisal of the consultation response was included within the report.

The Executive Board Member reported that in view of the more positive settlement a value of £560,000 had been available to make some critical adjustments to the budget strategy. He therefore recommended, on behalf of Executive Board, that the following adjustments, which took account of the consultation process and responded to the feedback from the proposals that were not supported, be made to the Budget Strategy:

Firstly, that the following proposals be removed:

- the closure of Whitland Household Waste Recycling Centre. This proposal had the most negative index score as well as more than 500 comments from the public;
- the closure of public toilets as this had the second most negative index score;
- the reduction to the Youth Support Services budgets, recognising the public consultation response as well as members' concerns and
- the proposed increases to cemetery charges.

It was also confirmed that, following discussions with officers in respect of leisure services who had originally proposed increasing charges, the additional income required would be met through increased usage of the Leisure Centres, negating the need to increase charges.

Secondly, that the following proposals be deferred:

- The proposed efficiency on ALN budgets be deferred to year 3 until new arrangements under the ALN (Wales) Act were better embedded;
- That the proposed administration fee for residential placements self-funders be deferred until year 3 of the plan.

The Executive Board Member also proposed, in recognition of the service pressures faced by departments, that:

- the £128,000 balance of additional Social Care Workforce grant be applied to Social services;
- £140,000 be provided towards highways budgets to improve more roads and improve capacity;
- £140,000 be delegated to the Director of Education to prioritise according to the department's requirements, recognising there were a number of pressures which it had not been possible to fund in the draft budget.

Adopting these proposals would, he considered, allow the County Council to deliver a fair and balanced budget, which responded to the major concerns fed back from the consultation. He therefore moved the recommendations of the Executive Board, subject to the amendments outlined above, in respect of the Budget Strategy 2020/21 and the Council Tax increase of 4.89% and approval of the medium term financial plan as a basis for the future years financial planning. The proposal was duly seconded.

The following amendment was thereupon proposed and seconded:-

“That money be released from reserves to fund bus services for those school children whose bus services have been removed due to regulation until the end of the summer term 2020 - cost estimated at £150k.”

The proposer outlined the rationale for the amendment.

Following a debate, during which advice was received from the Director of Corporate Services / Section 151 Officer on the budgetary implications and risks

and the Head of Administration and Law on the legal risks in relation to the proposed amendment, it was

RESOLVED that the Amendment to the Motion be not supported.

Council thereupon proceeded to vote on the substantive Motion and it was

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Motion be adopted and that the following recommendations of the Executive Board be adopted:-

7.1 that the Budget Strategy for 2020/21, be approved subject to the following amendments:

2020/21

- 7.1.1 the removal of the Youth Support Services budget reduction of £50k, recognising the public consultation response as well as members' concerns;**
- 7.1.2 to not implement the proposed increases to cemetery charges [£2k];**
- 7.1.3 the proposed efficiency on ALN budgets be deferred to year 3 until new arrangements under the ALN (Wales) Act are better embedded [£100k];**
- 7.1.4 the £128k balance of additional Social Care Workforce grant is applied to Social Services;**
- 7.1.5 £140k is provided towards highways budgets to improve more roads and improve capacity;**
- 7.1.6 £140k is delegated to the Director of Education to prioritise according to the department's requirements, recognising there were a number of pressures which it was not possible to fund in the draft budget;**
- 7.1.7 in respect of leisure services the additional income will be raised through increased usage rather than charges;**

2021/22 and 2022/23

- 7.1.8 to remove the proposal to close Whitland Household Waste Recycling Centre. This proposal had the most negative index score as well as more than 500 comments from the public;**
- 7.1.9 to remove the proposal to close public toilets as this had the second most negative index score;**
- 7.1.10 that the proposed administration fee for residential placements self funders be deferred until year 3 of the plan;**

7.2 that the Band D council Tax for 2020/21 be set at £1,316.55 (an increase of 4.89% for 2020-2021);

7.3 that the £560k recurrent funding available be used in full to support the proposed amendments in 7.1.1 to 7.1.6 above;

7.4 that the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved as a basis for future years financial planning.

8. EXECUTIVE BOARD RECOMMENDATION - FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME (COUNCIL FUND) – 2020/21 TO 2024/25

The Executive Board Member for Resources presented to the Council, on behalf of the Executive Board, the Five-Year Capital Programme (Council Fund) 2020/221 to 2024/2025, which took into account the consultation exercise undertaken and the Welsh Government settlement. The Executive Board, at its meeting held on the 24th February, 2020 [minute 7 refers] had considered the Programme and had made a number of recommendations for Council's consideration.

The Executive Board Member for Resources stated that the proposed capital programme, which anticipated an estimated spend of nearly £255m over the five years 2020/221 to 2024/2025, optimised the funding opportunities and maximised the funding available from external sources. A combination of existing and new schemes would, it was considered, develop the local economy, create jobs and enhance the quality of life for residents of Carmarthenshire. County Council funding for the programme was currently estimated at £126m with a further £129m sourced from external grant funding bodies. No forward indicators had been provided by Welsh Government in respect of capital funding beyond 2020/21 and the programme was, therefore, based on future years supported borrowing and general grant being at the same level as 2020/21.

The Executive Board Member for Resources advised that many of the investments, such as the 21st century schools programme, highways, regeneration and housing, would be familiar but it had again been possible to add investment into schemes which were deemed important for the county. Within Community Services the capital programme made material investment in leisure and cultural services. The most significant of these was £1.9m investment of new money into Oriol Myrddin, with £650k to be invested in Carmarthen Leisure Centre to complete the masterplan and continued support for private sector housing in 2024/25 for Disabled Facilities Grants. Within the Environment Department there would be continued support for highway improvements, bridge maintenance and road safety schemes in 2024/25. Council funding on highway maintenance would continue to be bolstered in 2020/21 through the Road Refurbishment Grant provided by Welsh Government. Council was informed that it had been possible to make additional commitments across the Council's estates with £2.5m provision for essential work to County Hall, £500k for works at Ty Elwyn and £3.5m towards the continued maintenance across the estate in 2024/25. New monies would be provided for Zero Carbon initiatives across the estate. Additionally, £2.7m of additional funding from Welsh Government would be utilised for the maintenance of school buildings. £4m was included for the redevelopment of Llandeilo Market Hall and £847k for the continued investment in Glanamman Industrial Estate. £500k had also been allocated towards the actions required following the Climate Emergency declared in 2019/20.

The Executive Board Member for Resources commented that support was also provided for the transformation strategy project within regeneration for 2024/25 which had the potential of attracting significant external funding to match-fund the Council's budget. Council's attention was drawn to the comprehensive details set out in appendix B to the report together with the reserve list of priorities. Officers would continue to monitor individual schemes and funding availability. Whilst both would need to be closely managed to ensure the schemes were delivered in full the Executive Board Member for Resources reported that the current programme was fully funded for the 5 years. Included in appendix C to the report was the

Council's Capital Strategy 2020/21 which was required by the Prudential Code of Capital Finance and detailed the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions were made.

In conclusion the Executive Board Member for Resources believed the capital programme was comprehensive, exciting and ambitious, with the Authority maximising opportunities and he thereupon moved the recommendations of the Executive Board.

The proposal was duly seconded.

The following amendment was thereupon proposed and seconded:-

"That the Authority invests in the setting up of a bus company using clean energy such as electric power by the start of the new school year 2020 by utilising £3m from capital reserves."

Council was advised that current legislation did not allow for local government to run transport companies although a Draft Public Transport (Wales) Bill was due to be considered by Welsh Government which may address this issue. The Director of Corporate Services /Section 151 Officer commented that if it was proposed to utilise £3m for the purpose stated then Council would need to identify what would be removed from the proposed Capital Programme to fund it as all the capital reserves were allocated over the 5 year programme. It was also clarified that if the £3m was funded by additional borrowing it would impact on the already agreed Revenue Budget [Minute 7 above refers].

[At this point the Chair adjourned the meeting for 20 minutes to enable the proposer and seconder of the amendment to seek further advice from the Director of Corporate Services / Section 151 Officer.]

Upon the reconvening of the meeting the proposer of the amendment stated that, with the consent of his seconder, he wished to withdraw the amendment following clarification from the Director of Corporate Services / Section 151 Officer and in the knowledge that the Welsh Government was in the process of considering the Draft Public Transport (Wales) Bill. It was requested, however, that cross-party discussions be commenced to consider the options and cost implications for establishing a transport company in anticipation of the aforementioned Bill's approval. The Chief Executive, in response to comments relating to the operational scope of such a transport company, suggested that the issue could be considered within the remit of the Swansea Bay City Deal in the context of establishing a regional transport plan. Members accepted this as a way forward.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Executive Board be accepted:-

- 8.1 that the Five-Year Capital Programme and its funding, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, with 2020/21 being a hard budget and 2021/22 to 2024/25 soft/indicative budgets be approved;**
- 8.2 that the programme be reviewed if anticipated external or County Council funding did not materialise;**
- 8.3 that the Capital Strategy, as detailed in Appendix C, be approved.**

9. EXECUTIVE BOARD RECOMMENDATION - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2022/23 AND HOUSING RENT SETTING FOR 2020/21

(NOTE: Councillors K. Broom, J. Edmunds, A.C. Jones, A.G. Morgan, D. Price, G.B. Thomas had earlier declared an interest in this item)

Council was informed that the Executive Board, at its meeting held on the 24th February, 2020 [minute 8 refers] had considered the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21 and had made a number of recommendations, as detailed within the Director of Corporate Services' report, for Council's consideration. It was noted that the report had also been considered, and endorsed, by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on the 5th February 2020 as part of the budget consultation process.

The report had been prepared reflecting the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, being the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *Plus* (CHS+) for the future. It was noted that the proposed investment within the current business plan had delivered the CHS by 2015 (to those homes where tenants had agreed to have the work undertaken) provided investment to maintain the CHS+ and continued investment for the Council's Affordable Housing Commitment.

The Executive Board Member for Resources commented that capital investment in the region of £230m had delivered the Carmarthenshire Home Standard for tenants and a further £49m had been spent in maintaining the CHS+ home standard for properties and tenants. Over the next 3 years it was expected that a further £49m would be spent on maintaining and upgrading the housing stock. He added that £42m would be provided over the next 3 years to support the affordable homes programme and this would see the increase in the supply of affordable housing throughout the county.

The Executive Board Member for Resources advised that, since 2015, the Authority had been required to adopt the Welsh Government Policy for Social Housing Rent Harmonisation, meaning that the proposed rent increase was prescribed by Welsh Government guidance and provided an equitable distribution of the rents for the social sector tenants. The policy had ended in 2018/19 and an interim policy adopted for 2019/20 for one year. The Welsh Government had now developed a new policy for implementation in 2020/21. This policy allowed Local Authorities within their target rent band to increase rent by CPI +1% only. It also allowed for the level of rent for individual tenants to raise by up to an additional £2 over and above CPI +1% for rent harmonisation, on condition that total rental income collected by the social landlord increased by no more than CPI +1%. The new policy would apply for 5 years from 2020/21 and contained additional criteria around tenant satisfaction, space standards, minimisation of evictions and energy efficiencies. It also identified the need to decarbonise social housing stock, which would be a major investment for Authorities.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Executive Board be adopted:-

9.1 Increase the average housing rent as per the Welsh

Government's Social Housing Rents Policy :-

- a) Properties at target rents to increase by 2.53%;
 - b) Properties where rent is below target rent will increase by 2.53% plus a maximum progression of £1;
 - c) Those rents above target be frozen until such time as they meet the target rent;
 - d) Thereby producing an increase on average housing rent of 2.7% or £2.36.
- 9.2 To implement maximum progression of £1.00, for rents below target, until target rents are achieved.
- 9.3 To maintain garage rents at £9.00 per week and garage bases at £2.25 per week.
- 9.4 To apply the service charge policy to ensure tenants who received the benefit from specific services paid for those services.
- 9.5 To increase charges for using the Council's sewerage treatment works in line with the rent increases.
- 9.6 Approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2020/21 (with 2021/22 and 2022/23 being soft budgets) as set out in Appendix B.
- 9.7 Approve the proposed Capital Programme, and applicable funding, for 2020/21 and the indicative spends for the future years 2021/22 to 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A.

10. EXECUTIVE BOARD RECOMMENDATION - THE CARMARTHENSHIRE HOMES STANDARD PLUS (CHS+) BUSINESS PLAN 2020-23

Council was informed that the Executive Board, at its meeting held on the 24th February 2020 (Minute 9 refers) had considered the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) Business Plan 2020-2023, the purpose of which was to:-

- Explain the vision and detail of maintaining and improving the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus over the next three years, and what it means for tenants;
- Set out the intention to develop a new Carmarthenshire standard by continuing to move towards carbon neutral homes, both existing and new, ensuring new supply chain, jobs and training opportunities are delivered;
- Confirm the financial profile, based on current assumptions, for the delivery of the CHS+ over the next three years;
- Produce a business plan for the annual application to Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) for 2020/21, equating to £6.1m.

The Executive Board Member for Housing commented that the Council would be working with partners to develop a new Carmarthenshire standard by continuing to move towards carbon neutral homes, both existing and new. With the assistance of Cardiff University, the Authority had been working on the retrofitting of a range of low carbon technologies including renewable energy supplies, energy storage and energy demand reduction technologies. She stated that nearly £49m had been set aside to maintain the CHS+ for existing tenants over the next 3 years to enable tenants to benefit from homes that were carbon friendly and cheaper to run.

The Executive Board Member for Housing confirmed that the Authority was on the verge of achieving its promise of delivering 1,000 more affordable homes by 2021 as a result of buying houses on the market, bringing empty houses back in to use and by building new homes. She added that whilst much had been achieved, it was recognised that there was still more to be done but the Authority was ready to face the challenges. The published plan detailed the Authority's intention to develop a new build programme for Cartrefi Croeso to enable the maximisation of housing especially in rural areas. Work to build new Council homes at Dylan had already started and with nearly £52m available to spend over the next three years on building more Council homes this would align with the wider housing investment programme. This would enable the Authority to focus on the proposed development in the Tyisha ward, the Wellness Village, Town Centres and rural towns.

The Executive Board Member for Housing advised that the Authority was aware that the introduction of Universal Credit had presented a challenge for tenants in managing their monthly budgets, but the action plan implemented by the Authority had reduced the impact as much as possible for them. In conclusion she expressed the view that whilst this was an exciting time it was also a time of uncertainty for tenants. However, the Authority had been able to keep the rent increase for 2020/21 at an average of 2.7% and that this achievement should not be underestimated. Over the next year the Authority would need to ensure clarity from Welsh Government on future financial priorities in terms of maintaining existing standards, introduction of new standards to support the decarbonisation agenda and building affordable homes for those in need.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Executive Board be adopted:-

- 10.1 That the vision of the CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years be confirmed;**
- 10.2 That the submission of the 2020/23 Business Plan to Welsh Government be confirmed;**
- 10.3 That the intention to develop a new Carmarthenshire standard by continuing to move towards carbon neutral homes, both existing and new, ensuring new supply chain, jobs and training opportunities are delivered be noted.**

11. EXECUTIVE BOARD RECOMMENDATION - TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2020-21

Council was informed that the Executive Board, at its meeting held on 24th February, 2020 (minute 10 refers) had considered the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2020/21.

The Executive Board Member advised Council that in line with the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council must maintain a Treasury Management Policy detailing the policies and objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities and also approve a Treasury Management Strategy annually before the start of the financial year to which it

relates. In addition, under the Local Government Act 2003, the Council was required to approve the Treasury Management Indicators for the coming year.

In accordance with the above requirements, Council considered the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for the 2020/21 financial.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Executive Board be adopted:-

11.1 That the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2020-21 and the recommendations contained therein be approved;

11.2 That the Treasury Management Indicators, Prudential Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, the Investment Strategy and recommendations therein be approved.

12. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21

[NOTE:

1. Councillors L.R. Bowen, C.A. Campbell, Arwel Davies, J.A. Davies, E. Dole, J.S. Edmunds, L.D. Evans, R. Evans, S.J.G. Gilasbey, T.M. Higgins, P. Hughes-Griffiths, R. James, G. John, B.W. Jones, G.R. Jones, K. Madge, D. Nicholas, G.B. Thomas and A. Vaughan-Owen had earlier declared interests in this item;
2. All officers in attendance at the meeting declared a personal interest in this item and left the meeting prior to its consideration with the exception of the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management and Performance who remained in the meeting to respond to any questions arising on the report), the Democratic Services Officer, who remained in the meeting to take notes and the Webcasting Officer].

The Council was reminded that under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 all Local Authorities were required to prepare a Pay Policy Statement which must be agreed and published by 1st April every year. The Statement required the approval of full Council and had to set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers, its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and its employees who were not Chief Officers.

Apart from the recent agreement on the payment of a Winter Maintenance Allowance (which was incorporated into the Pay Policy) there were no significant changes to policies or regulations this year and as the NJC Trade Unions and employers had not yet concluded pay negotiations, the Pay Policy included 2019-2020 pay scales which would be updated once notification had been received of an agreement. The new pay scales would then be incorporated into the Pay Policy.

It was noted that the Council's politically balanced Pay Policy Advisory Panel had provided input into the formulation of the Pay Policy Statement and its recommendations had been incorporated into the final document for the Council's

approval. In particular, the Panel had been keen to continue supporting the lowest paid by ensuring that the equivalent of the “Real Living Wage” (RLW), as set by the Living Wage Foundation, was paid from 1st April 2020. The new hourly rate was £9.30 so a Living Wage Supplement would be payable to some employees from 1st April pending the outcome of the National Pay negotiations. This would mean that an increase in pay for the lower paid would not be delayed. The cost to the Council would be in the region of £4K.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 be approved in compliance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011.

13. BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Council considered its representation on the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority [BBNPA] in light of advice from the Deputy Minister for Local Government and Housing that the reduction in its representation from the current 2 members to 1 member would take effect from 1st April 2020 in line with the proposal to reduce total membership from 24 to 18 members.

The Council’s current representatives were Councillors Andrew James (80% of ward within park area) and Kevin Madge (50% of ward within park area) and as such it was recommended that the Council’s representation be revised in accordance with the decision of Welsh Government and that Cllr Andrew James be appointed as the Council’s sole representative on the BBNPA.

It was considered that the Welsh Government should be urged to review its decision in respect of Carmarthenshire’s representation particularly as 17% of the Park’s landmass was within the County.

RESOLVED that the Council’s representation on the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority be revised in accordance with the decision of Welsh Government and that Councillor Andrew James be appointed as the Council’s sole representative.

14. EXECUTIVE BOARD - 3RD FEBRUARY, 2020

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 3rd February, 2020 be received.

CHAIR

DATE