

EXECUTIVE BOARD

MONDAY, 10TH APRIL, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole [Chair]

Councillors:

M. Gravell, D.M. Jenkins, P.A. Palmer, L.M. Stephens, J. Tremlett, H.A.L. Evans and T.J. Jones

Present in respect of minute number 5:

Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the Education & Children Task & Finish Group

The following Officers were in attendance:

Mr M. James	-	Chief Executive
Mr C. Moore	-	Director of Corporate Services
Mr G. Morgans	-	Interim Director of Education & Children
Mr I. Jones	-	Head of Leisure
Ms L. Rees Jones	-	Head of Administration & Law
Mrs D. Hockenull	-	Media & Marketing Manager
Mrs M. Evans Thomas	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer
Miss F. Rees	-	Senior Marketing & Media Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen : 10.00 a.m. - 10.55 a.m.

1. APOLOGIES AND OTHER MATTERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L.D. Evans and G.O. Jones.

The Chair extended congratulations to Côr Merched Sir Gâr on winning the Côr Cymru competition over the weekend. The choir will go on to represent Wales at the Eurovision Choir of the Year 2017 competition in Riga, Latvia in July. Congratulations were also extended to Ysgol Iau Llangennech and Ysgol Teilo Sant on reaching the finals of the competition.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions on notice had been submitted by members.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chair advised that no public questions on notice had been received.

5. EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT 2015/16: NARROWING THE ATTAINMENT GAP - LEARNERS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The Executive Board was informed that the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 24th September, 2015 (minute 8 refers), established a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review into the attainment gap for eligible for free school meals learners. The review culminated in the formulation of 8 recommendations following consideration of a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between December 2015 and November 2016.

The Executive Board was advised that, following recent changes in legislation, the Task & Finish Group had requested that recommendation 6 be amended as follows:-

“That the County Council lobbies the Welsh Government on the importance of securing and safeguarding funding for the longer term to support out most disadvantaged pupils.”

The Executive Board expressed its appreciation to the members of the Task and Finish Group and the officers involved on the production of an excellent report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group on the Review into the Attainment Gap for Eligible for Free School Meals Learners, as detailed within the report, to include the amended recommendation 6 as detailed above, be endorsed.

6. EDUCATION THROUGH REGIONAL WORKING (ERW) BUSINESS PLAN 2017-20

The Board considered the Education through Regional Working (ERW) Business Plan 2017/20, which outlined all the arrangements for delivering ERW's strategic vision and co-ordinated the contributions of Local Authorities, schools and strategic partners.

The plan had been approved by the ERW Joint Committee and captured the following:-

- ERW's Vision & Mission Statement
- Regional and National Priorities
- Governance & Business Planning Framework, including Accountability
- Priorities and Plans
- Outcomes

Progress on the Business Plan would be monitored annually, with regular monitoring of agreed actions and quarterly financial monitoring.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the ERW Business Plan 2017-20 be noted.

7. AMENDMENT TO TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY, STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

The Board was reminded that the Director of Corporate Services, at the Council meeting held on 22nd February, 2017, as part of the budget strategy report,

advised Council of the ongoing review into the basis of the principal repayment of the Authority's debt which is the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.

The Board considered a report providing a summary of the outcome of the review and advising that the Council should consider changing the basis of the repayment of the Council's borrowing from a 4% reducing balance basis to a straight line basis which will be calculated based on the estimated "Asset Life" of the Authority's fixed assets.

It was therefore proposed that the current MRP Policy be amended to one which supported a more prudent annual provision, on the following basis:-

- (1) Supported borrowing and expenditure incurred before 1st April, 2008, as at 31st March, 2016 – charged to revenue over 40 years on a straight line basis, and this policy be implemented for the 2016-2017 accounts and for the Revenue Budget Strategy 2017-2018 to 2019- 2020;
- (2) Unsupported borrowing – the future borrowing value is charged to revenue over 40 years or by the estimated economic life of the asset if shorter;
- (3) The MRP Policy for the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) Highways and for the fleet programme to remain as currently approved.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the amendments to the Treasury Management Policy, Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, as detailed above, be approved.

8. BUSINESS RATES - HIGH STREET RATE RELIEF SCHEME 2017/18

The Board considered a report providing details of the High Street Rate Relief Scheme introduced by the Welsh Government for 2017/18. The scheme provides additional relief aimed specifically at high street retailers such as shops, pubs, restaurants and cafes that have seen their rates increase as a result of the 2017 revaluation undertaken by the Valuation Office Agency.

As this was a temporary measure the Welsh Government was not making any legislative changes but instead would allow billing authorities to grant relief under the general discretionary relief powers available under Section 47 of the Local Government (Finance) Act 1988.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 8.1 that the High Street Rate Relief Scheme be adopted for 2017/18;**
- 8.2 that relief be granted in accordance with the Welsh Government guidelines;**
- 8.3 that applications which are not specifically covered by the guidelines or otherwise require specific consideration, be determined by the Executive Board Member for Resources.**

CHAIR

DATE