

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday, 6 February 2017

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole (Chair)

Councillors:

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

Present as Observers:-

Councillors D.M. Cundy, J.S. Edmunds and J. James

The following Officers were in attendance:

Mr M. James	-	Chief Executive
Mr J. Morgan	-	Director of Community Services
Mr C. Moore	-	Director of Corporate Services
Ms R. Mullen	-	Director of Environment
Mr G. Morgans	-	Interim Director of Education and Children
Ms W. Walters	-	Assistant Chief Executive
Ms L. Rees-Jones	-	Head of Administration and Law
Mr O. Bowen	-	Head of Financial Services
Ms D. Hockenhull	-	Marketing and Media Manager
Mr K. Thomas	-	Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall - 10.00 - 11.10 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H.A.L. Evans.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.

No declarations of personal interest were made at the meeting.

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. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2017/18 TO 2019/20

The Executive Board considered a report which brought together the latest proposals for the Revenue Budget 2017/2018, provided indicative figures for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 financial years and summarised the latest budgetary position giving an update on the budget validation, spending pressures, the Welsh Government final settlement and the responses from the budget consultation.

The Executive Board Member – Resources outlined to the Board a number of factors influencing the budget which included anticipated estimated additional

Welsh Government funding for a number of areas, notably, Social Care – £600k to support the pressures of the national living wage, and support for non-domestic rate relief particularly targeted at businesses on the high street. Domiciliary Care was also highlighted where additional funding of £150k would be available through the increase of the minimum weekly charge from £60-£70. However, he advised that until such time as confirmation had been received in respect of the value of all the specific grants, which would support the budget plan, an element of financial risk was placed on the current plan

In addition to the above, The Executive Board Member – Resources reported that discussions had been undertaken with the Council’s Treasury Management Consultants, in accordance with discretion allowed under regulations, on the feasibility of making an adjustment to the Minimum Revenue Provision from a 4% charge reducing balance basis, to a 2.5% straight line basis which, if approved by the Wales Audit Office and the Council, could result in the potential release of funds in the region of £2.5m. If the adjustment were approved, it was considered reasonable for the estimated savings to be utilised for one off items or, items that could be backed in the short term by reserves. In that regard, it was being proposed that the sum of £1m be brought into the Revenue Budget Strategy in 2017/18 and £1.5m into the capital programme in 2017/18 to facilitate the undertaking of urgent works to Burry Port Harbour.

The Executive Board Member - Resources advised that having regard to the above factors, together with the Authority having benefitted from a positive settlement from Welsh Government, it had been possible for the initial efficiencies proposed in the original budget to be reviewed. As a result, an additional £1.92m had been identified which could be made available in 2017/18 thereby enabling further consideration to be given to the following areas:-

1. The consultation feedback on the savings and what should be implemented,
2. The level of increase in Council Tax
3. Any additional investment in particular service areas.

As a result of that consideration, the following amendments were proposed to be made to some of the report’s efficiency proposals which, it was hoped, demonstrated the Authority had listened to the views expressed as part of the consultation exercise:-

- The proposal in respect of grants to the voluntary sector be phased over a longer period of time and that £135k of the proposed reduction be reversed and a reduction of £35k per annum be phased over the future years commencing in 2017/18;
- The proposal to transfer or close St Clears Leisure Centre be reconsidered resulting in the withdrawal of the 3 year savings of £96k, of which £16k was in respect of the 2017/18 financial year;
- The proposed savings for the Youth Service in respect of The Quay, Centre, Carmarthen be halved thereby allowing a further £10k to support the youth service.
- An additional £1.76m be added to the Delegated Schools Budget, thereby bringing it back to a cash neutral position.

In concluding, the Executive Board Member recommended that the Council Tax increase for 2017/18 remain at the proposed 2.5 %, which was supported by the majority of respondents to the consultation.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:-

- 5.1 that the Budget Strategy for 2017/18, be approved subject to the amendments and proposals detailed above;**
- 5.2 that the Band D council Tax for 2017/18 be set at £1,145.61 (an increase of 2.5% for 2017-2018);**
- 5.3 That the provisional medium term financial plan (inclusive of the amendments noted above) be approved as a basis for future years planning.**

6. FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME (COUNCIL FUND) 2017/18 - 2021/22

The Executive Board considered a report which brought together the latest proposals for the Five Year Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2021/2022 taking into account the consultation exercise undertaken.

The Board noted that the capital programme proposed gross expenditure for 2017/18 of £71.760m, with the projected funding of £46.642m from the County Council through the use of borrowing, capital receipts, reserves and general capital grant and the balance of £25.118m coming from external sources. The Board was advised that the capital programme was projected to be fully funded over the first 4 years from 2017/18 through to 2020/21 while the final year 2021/2022 showed a shortfall which would be reviewed over the coming year.

The Executive Board Member – Resources informed the Board that, in total, the five year rolling programme would realise investment of £210m (County Council funding of £124m and £85m external funding) and the Authority, as part of that programme had included additional new projects important to the county, for example new schemes within Burry Port Harbour, Pembrey Country park, Highway and Bridge Maintenance, 21st Century Schools, Cross Hands Link Road, Tywi Valley Transport Corridor, Glanamman Workshops and Information Technology.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT

- 6.1 the Five Year Capital Programme and funding, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, with 2017/18 being a hard budget and 2018/19 to 2021/22 soft/indicative budgets be approved;**
- 6.2 the 2021/22 budget be reviewed over the coming year in order to address the funding shortfall;**
- 6.3 the programme be reviewed, as usual, if anticipated External or, County Council funding did not materialise.**

7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2017/18 TO 2019/20 AND HOUSING RENT SETTING FOR 2017/18

The Executive Board considered a report prepared by the Director of Corporate Services, in conjunction with officers from the Communities Department that brought together the latest proposals for the Revenue and Capital Budgets for the

Housing Revenue Account 2017/2020. It was noted that the report had been considered, and endorsed, by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on the 20th January 2017 as part of the budget consultation process.

The Executive Board Member – Housing advised that 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 delivered the CHS by 2015 (to those homes where tenants had agreed to have the work undertaken) provided investment to maintain the CHS+ and commenced investment for the Council's Affordable Housing Commitment.

Councillor D. Cundy referred to concern expressed by the Community Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on the 20th January, 2017, on the potential impact of the U.K Government's Housing Benefit changes, especially for those under 21 years of age, and enquired whether the effect of the legislation was being monitored, specifically, with regard to the hidden homeless and 'sofa surfer' generation for many under 25. The Executive Board Member – Housing in recognising those concerns outlined to the Board various groups which would not be affected by the legislation. She confirmed that the Authority, together with a number of its partners, Housing Associations, the WLGA and other local authorities would be monitoring the legislation's impact. In addition, the Housing Division would be providing advice and guidance to those affected by the legislation, as set out within the report (page 253 refers), together with establishing a Homes Strategy for the under 35's.

The Executive Board having considered the recommendations of the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Steering group

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO:-

7.1 increase the rent in line with Welsh Government Guidelines i.e.:-

- Properties at target rents to increase by 2.5%(CPI + 1.5%)
- Properties where rent is below target rent to increase by 2.5% (CPI + 1.5%) plus a maximum progression of £2
- Properties above target rent be frozen until such time as they met the target

thereby producing an average housing rent increase of £2.84, a sustainable business plan, maintain CHS+ and resource the Affordable Homes Programme;

- 7.2 Continue with the maximum progression of £2 for rents below target, until target rents were achieved;**
- 7.3 Increase garage rents to £9.00 per week (from £8.75 in 2016/17) and garage bases to £2.25 per week (from £2.20 in 2016/17);**
- 7.4 Apply the service charge policy to ensure tenants who received the benefit from specific services paid for those services;**
- 7.5 Increase charges for using the Council's sewerage treatment works in line with the rent increase;**

- 7.6 Approve the proposed Capital Programme, and applicable funding, for 2017/18 and the indicative spends for future years. 2018/19 to 2021/22, as set out in Appendix A to the report,
- 7.7 Approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2017/18 (with 2018/19 and 2019/20 being soft budgets), as set out in Appendix B to the report

8. THE CARMARTHENSHIRE HOMES STANDARD PLUS (CHS+) "DELIVERING WHAT MATTERS" BUSINESS PLAN 2017-20.

The Executive Board considered the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) 'Delivering What Matters 2017 – 2020' plan the purpose of which was to:

- explain the vision and detail of the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus, and what it meant for tenants;
- confirm the financial profile, based on current assumptions, for the delivery of CHS+ over the next three years; and
- produce a business plan for the annual application to Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) for 2017/18 equating to £6.1m.

The Executive Board Member for Housing advised that if the report and its recommendations were to be adopted, it would result in some £55m being spent over the next three years in maintaining and further improving the CHS+ (£25M) and delivering the Affordable Homes Plan (£30m) through a range of solutions including, new build.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT:-

- 8.1 The vision of CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years be confirmed;
- 8.2 the submission of the Plan to the Welsh Government be confirmed.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STRATEGY 2017-18

The Executive Board was reminded that as part of the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council had agreed to maintain a Treasury Management Policy detailing the policies and objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities and to also approve a Treasury Management Strategy annually before the start of the financial year to which it related. 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, the Executive Board considered the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for the 2017-18 financial year prior to its formal submission to the Council for final adoption.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that:-

- 9.1 the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2017-18 and the recommendations contained therein be approved,
- 9.2 the Treasury Management Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and recommendations therein be approved.

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2016 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2016.

The Executive Board considered an update on the treasury management activities for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st December 2016.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be approved.

11. BURRY PORT HARBOUR - FUTURE MAINTENANCE

Further to minute 11 of its meeting held on the 13th July 2015, the Executive Board considered a report on the outcome of investigations undertaken into the dredging works required to be undertaken to Burry Port Harbour, together with a review of the maintenance requirements for the grade II listed harbour walls. That report provided a summary of the identified issues, risks and costs along with a range of future maintenance options ranging from a 'do nothing approach' to a sustainable planned maintenance schedule that allowed for a reasonable degree of certainty over on-going costs in relation to both dredging and repairs to the harbour wall. However, the 'do nothing' approach did not apply to the harbour walls, in view of their listed status.

The Executive Board noted that the Community Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on the 20th January, 2017 had endorsed the report's findings and recommended appropriate provision be made within the Council's revenue and capital budgets to sustain the harbour on an on-going basis.

The Executive Board, in response to the scrutiny committee's recommendation, was reminded that as part of its earlier consideration of the budgetary proposals (minutes 5 and 6 above refers) it had agreed to set aside an additional £2.34m within the Council's capital programme to fund urgent works to the Harbour.

In response to a question from Councillor Cundy on the feasibility of any extracted sea sand and sea silt dredged from the harbour being sold to mitigate the costs of dredging and repair to the harbour walls, the Board was advised that was not considered to be possible.

A statement in support of the harbour proposals was made by Councillor J. James

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, that the future maintenance programme for Burry Port Harbour and funding proposals be approved.

12. CLOSED ROAD CYCLING CIRCUIT SITE

Further to its meeting held on the 9th May, 2016 (minute 5 refers) the Executive Board considered an update report on the proposals for the development of a Closed Road Cycling Circuit Site within Carmarthenshire. It was noted that following advertising for expressions of interest from Carmarthenshire land owners who may be interested in working with the Authority and Welsh Cycling to develop the facility on their land, two potential sites had been identified being the Council Owned facility at Pembrey Country Park and land at Ffos Las Racecourse. The Board was advised that after considering the two potential sites, Welsh Cycling had, subject to favourable construction costs, expressed its preference for the development to be provided at Pembrey Country Park.

In response to a question from Councillor Cundy on the time scale for the circuit's provision the Leader of the Council advised that every effort would be made to facilitate its speedy provision.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 12.1 To approve the preferred site for development of a Closed Road Cycling Circuit put forward by Welsh Cycling, namely the old industrial estate by the entrance to Pembrey Country Park,**
- 12.2 To proceed with the land exchange and complete the necessary documentation for the variation to the Joint Venture Agreement,**
- 12.3 That Carmarthenshire County Council's design and construction team be instructed to complete site surveys, then procure and manage the construction through the internal framework agreement in order to best manage design and construction risks, in line with the budget and Capital programme**
- 12.4 That the Council's property, legal and leisure officers liaise with Welsh Cycling to agree a full repairing and maintenance lease for the site at a peppercorn rent to include a clause ensuring that any surpluses from the operation of the facility would be re-invested into the development of cycling within Carmarthenshire**

13. DRAFT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER - LLANELLI TOWN CENTRE

The Executive Board considered a report on draft proposals for the introduction of a Local Development Order for Llanelli Town Centre with a view to reflecting the corporate regeneration objectives for the town centre whilst ensuring the issues of its ongoing vitality and viability were appropriately considered utilising the provisions of national planning policy. The Board was advised that the Order, if introduced, would allow a range of uses within a defined spatial area to proceed without the need for the submission of a planning application to the Local Planning Authority, subject to the Authority issuing a 'certificate of conformity'.

In response to a question from Councillor Cundy, on the provision of a plan for the development of Llanelli, the Leader of the Council confirmed that a 30 year masterplan had previously been prepared, which was being progressed by the Llanelli Task Force, and was available for the public to view.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT:-

- 13.1 the report, and scope, of the proposed Local Development Order be approved for consideration through the democratic reporting process**
- 13.2 the publication of the final Local Development Order for public consultation for a minimum period of 6 weeks be approved**
- 13.3 delegated authority be granted to officers to prepare evidence in support of the Local Development Order,**
- 13.4 delegated authority be granted to officers to make minor editorial and factual amendments to the Local Development Order.**

CHAIR

DATE