

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday, 1 February 2016

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole (Chair);

Councillors:

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

The following Officers were in attendance:

M. James, Chief Executive;
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;
R. Mullen, Director of Environment;
R. Sully, Director of Education & Children;
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;
J.A. Rees, Head of Learner Programmes;
R. Staines, Head of Housing and Public Protection;
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);
W. Walters, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration & Policy);
O. Bowen, Chief Accountant;
K. Pett, Policy, Consultation & Engagement Officer;
D. Williams, Press Manager;
M. Hughes, Assistant Consultant;
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall - 10.00 am - 12.00 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON THE 4TH JANUARY 2016.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 4th January 2016 be signed as a correct record.

4. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

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

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

6. PROPOSALS FOR 3-19 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT - REFORM IN CARMARTHENSHIRE SCHOOLS

The Executive Board considered a report entitled 'Palmantu'r Ffordd / Paving the Way' which was a 3-19 strategic review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Carmarthenshire. Partially building on existing practice, the report offered strategic and operational proposals to promote and develop the Donaldson (Successful Futures) recommendations, the Furlong Review and the New Deal in all Carmarthenshire's schools and special settings. Reference was made to other

policy drivers such as the Lead Creative Schools initiative, Global Futures and the Bilingual +1 nation. Currently, the 116 page document had 47 recommendations and approached curriculum and assessment reform at several scales.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

6.1 that the internal interim report, entitled ‘Palmantu’r Ffordd / Paving the Way’, be received;

6.2 to seek approval for the main findings of Paving the Way.

7. MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME - PROPOSED DISCONTINUATION OF COPPERWORKS INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL AND LAKEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL ESTABLISH A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Executive Board was advised that in accordance with its decision on the 15th June 2015 (minute 4 refers) a Statutory Notice had been published on the 3rd November 2015 detailing the Council’s intention to proceed with the discontinuation of Copperworks Infant and Nursery School and Lakefield Primary School, and providing any objectors a period of one month in which to object to the proposal. It was reported that as no objections had been received to the proposal consideration would need to be given as to whether the Council should now proceed with the closure of the schools which had been endorsed by the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on the 21st January 2016.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL to proceed with its proposal to discontinue Copperworks Infant and Nursery School and Lakefield Primary School and to implement the proposal as detailed in the Statutory Notice dated 3rd November, 2015.

8. NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES

Further to Minute 10 of the meeting held on the 15th June 2015 the Board considered a report detailing the National Botanical Garden’s response to the request that it consider introducing an all-year round discount on admission charges for Carmarthenshire residents in view of the support provided by the Council. The Trustees had confirmed their gratefulness for the County Council’s continued support and had offered a special discounted price for Carmarthenshire residents in respect of the annual membership from April 2016- March 2017 where this was paid by direct debit.

Cllr. D.M. Jenkins, the Council’s representative on the Garden’s Board of Trustees, commented that in his meetings with representatives of the NBGW he had been encouraged by their acknowledgement of the need to finance the Garden on a more commercial basis and reduce reliance on public funding.

Reference was made to the fact that the Garden was due to appoint a replacement Director for Dr. Rosie Plummer who was standing down. Dr. Plummer was thanked for her contribution to the Garden and it was suggested, in view of the financial support given by the Council, that Cllr. D.M. Jenkins should be involved in the appointment of her replacement.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

8.1 to accept the offer of a discounted membership rate for Carmarthenshire residents as detailed and agree payment of the annual grant for 2015/16;

8.2 that the NBGW be requested to involve the Council’s representative on

the Board of Trustees in the process for the appointment of a new Director.

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2015 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2015.

The Executive Board considered an update on the treasury management activities from 1st April 2015 to 31st December 2015.

The Executive Board was informed that previously reported 82.5% of the claim submitted to the administrators of the Kaupthing Singer and Friedlander Icelandic Bank remained unchanged and it was expected that a total repayment of up to 85% of the claim would be received.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be approved.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2016-17.

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 which detailed 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.

The Executive Board thanked officers for the report and in accordance with the above requirements, considered the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for the 2016-17 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 2016-17 and the recommendations contained therein be approved;

9.2 the Treasury Management Indicators and recommendations therein be approved.

11. DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION.

The Executive Board considered a report detailing an application from the Communities Department to the Development Fund for financial assistance for the appointment of an accredited financial investigator for the restraint and confiscation of assets of any person committing criminal offences under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The funding requested was £151,500.00.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

11.1 to approve the sum of £50,500 per annum for a period of three years to fund the appointment of an accredited financial investigator for the restraint and confiscation of assets of any person committing criminal offences under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002;

11.2 that interest be not charged as per amended Development Fund conditions;

11.3 that Development Fund criteria no. 5 be set aside for this application;

11.4 that the repayment for the above scheme be over four years.

12. WALES AUDIT OFFICE - CORPORATE ASSESSMENT REPORT 2015.

The Executive Board considered a Corporate Assessment Report of Carmarthenshire County Council for 2015, published by the Wales Audit Office [WAO], the purpose of which was to provide a position statement of the authority's capacity and capability to deliver continuous improvement. Carmarthenshire County Council had been highly praised by the WAO for having a well established vision that was driven forward by a strong collective leadership from both Executive and Corporate Management Teams. A clear framework of well-aligned plans and strategies that translated high level outcomes the Council had agreed with partners into priorities for action had also been recognised ensuring a strong ethos of continuous improvement ran through everything the Council did. The Auditor General had concluded that 'Carmarthenshire County Council, demonstrating ambition in its vision, with collective leadership and more robust and transparent governance, is delivering improved outcomes for its citizens although some out-dated approaches may limit the speed of progress.'

The Executive Board paid tribute to the assistance offered to them by staff during the audit process.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

12.1 that the content of the Corporate Assessment Report 2015 be approved;

12.2 that an action plan is produced to address the Proposals for Improvement made within the Report.

13. DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS IN SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING SERVICES.

The Executive Board considered a report which provided an update on the work being undertaken to develop an awareness and understanding of the alternative models of delivering social care and housing services. Where appropriate and beneficial this might result in detailed options and business case(s) for alternative service delivery models for identified and agreed services.

It was confirmed that arrangements had been made for an all-member seminar to be held on the 2nd March 2016 in connection with the aforementioned.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

13.1 that the approach for the consideration and development of alternative service delivery models for social care and housing services be confirmed;

13.2 to approve the planned engagement with Members and staff during February 2016 on the approach to developing an awareness and understanding of the range of alternative service delivery models, and their appropriateness to a number of services in the Communities Department.

14. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2016/17 TO 2018/19

[NOTE: All officers, apart from the Democratic Services Officer who had been asked by the Executive Board to remain in the meeting to record the decision, left the meeting during consideration and determination of proposals regarding the pay award for staff.]

The Executive Board considered a report which brought together the latest proposals for the Revenue Budget 2016/2017 with indicative figures for the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 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 advised that following the consultation period the Executive Board had considered amendments to a number of proposals detailed within the report and it was hoped that this would demonstrate that the Authority had listened to the views expressed as part of the consultation exercise. The following amendments were therefore proposed:-

Environment Department

- The reduction in the Flood Defence, Land Drainage and Coastal Protection budget is withdrawn for the 3 years, total value of £118k;
- The reduction in Highways Infrastructure maintenance budget is removed for year 1, total value of £512k;
- The reduction in the Cleansing services and Environment Enforcement budget is removed for each of the 3 years, total value of £252k;
- The proposal to introduce a charge for home to school transport is deferred for 2 years.

Communities Department

- The Meals on Wheels increase in the meal cost be phased over 3 years as opposed to be implemented in one, reducing the saving in year 1 by £38k.

Education Department

- The saving for short breaks/respite for Disabled Children and young people be removed altogether, taking away a cut of £50k.

In addition to the above it was proposed that there be additional investment into the following two specific service areas:

1. Youth Service - £50k to 'Bolster professional capacity to strengthen expertise in safeguarding vulnerable young people, especially with respect to sexual exploitation and the risk of radicalisation, thereby supporting prevention and early intervention strategies to avoid disengagement, supporting pathway to employment or training opportunities and minimising the number of young people at risk of becoming NEET.'
2. Highways Infrastructure - £200k to fund £2.4m of capital expenditure on the highways and supporting infrastructure network in the areas of greatest need.

It was considered that adopting these proposals would use a significant amount of the money identified in the report [p.186] but would also allow the Council the opportunity to review the level of Council Tax increase and it was therefore proposed that the Council Tax increase be reduced to 3.85%.

The Executive Board thanked officers for their hard work in preparing a realistic and sustainable budget and for organising a comprehensive consultation process.

In response to a question from Councillor J. Edmunds as to whether savings could be achieved on the budget allocated to meet redundancy costs in schools the Chief Executive advised that school staffing decisions rested with the schools and the Authority had no input yet had to pick up the cost. The Authority would

however continue to lobby to change this arrangement. In response to a further question from Councillor J. Edmunds regarding care home costs the Chief Executive advised that, taking into account private care home costs and inflation, the proposals in terms of the Council's care homes were considered to be fair.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

- 14.1 that the Budget Strategy for 2016/17, be approved subject to the amendments and proposals detailed above;**
- 14.2 that the Band D council Tax for 2016/17 be set at £1,117.67 (an increase of 3.85% for 2016-2017);**
- 14.3 to consolidate the nationally agreed 1% pay award for JNC staff with effect from 1st April 2016 and approve a 1% pay award for all other staff with effect from 1st April 2016 which would be consolidated by, but not in addition to, any national pay award agreed in 2016;**
- 14.4 that the Director of Corporate Services will advise and recommend to County Council on 10th March of any impact and consequential action required from the Final Settlement which is due to be published by Welsh Government on 2nd March 2016, and debated on 9th March 2016.**

15. FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17 - 2020/21.

The Executive Board considered a report which brought together the latest proposals for the Five Year Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2020/201 The report took into account the consultation exercise undertaken and the revenue implications arising from the capital programme.

The Board noted that the capital programme proposed gross expenditure for 2016/17 of £61.706m with the projected funding of the programme being £43.370m from the County Council through the use of borrowing, capital receipts, reserves, general capital grant and outcome agreement grant. The balance of funding of £18.336m would come from external sources. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the capital programme was projected to be fully funded over the first 4 years from 2016/17 through to 2019/20 although 2020/21 showed a shortfall which would be reviewed over the coming year.

The Chair commented that the programme aimed to counteract austerity with regeneration.

In response to a question from Councillor D. Cundy regarding the future of Parc Howard Mansion the Chair reiterated that he had started consultation with members of Llanelli Town Council, the Parc Howard Association and other parties to discuss a way forward on the basis that the building, and park, had a future but it needed to have a purpose combined with sensitive commercialisation to make it sustainable without being a draw on public funding.

In response to a question from Councillor J. Edmunds regarding the £7m allocated to the Social Care Llanelli Are Review the Chief Executive advised that opportunities were still being explored in regard to potential sites for a new care home. In response to a further question from Councillor J. Edmunds regarding the proposed cycle path from Carmarthen to Llandeilo and the liability for its maintenance costs the Chief Executive commented that whilst the business case was still being looked into it would be a significant attraction for tourists to Carmarthenshire which, with the plans for renovating the Carmarthen velodrome and the various other cycle paths that already existed, was rapidly gaining a reputation amongst the cycling fraternity as an attractive holiday and short break destination.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- 15.1 that the Five Year Capital Programme and funding as detailed in Appendix B, with 2016/17 being a hard budget and 2017/18 to 2020/21 soft/indicative budgets be approved;**
- 15.2 that the 2020/21 budget be reviewed over the coming year in order to address the funding shortfall;**
- 15.3 that the programme be reviewed, as is usual, if anticipated External or County Council funding did not materialise.**

16. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND HOUSING RENT SETTING FOR 2016/17.

The Executive Board considered a report which had been prepared by the Director of Corporate Services in conjunction with officers from the Communities Department and brought together the latest proposals for the Revenue and Capital Budgets for the Housing Revenue Account 2016/2019. The report had been considered, and endorsed, by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on the 15th January 2016 as part of the budget consultation process.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the report had been prepared reflecting the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan which was the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *Plus* (CHS+) for the future and it was noted that the proposed investment within the current business plan delivered the CHS by 2015.

Councillor D. Cundy asked if any assistance could be provided to families whose income might be static and who might also have to pay for school meals. In response the Head of Housing and Public Protection advised that the Authority was able to offer assistance to families who might find themselves in difficulty with rents. The Chief Executive added that families could also apply for free school meals and without worry of any stigma as a result of the technology used by schools in canteens.

In response to a question from Councillor T. Devichand officers agreed to circulate details of the number of households which would see a decrease in their rent.

The Executive Board having considered the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Steering Group recommendations,

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

- 16.1 to increase the average housing rent by 2.97% (£2.27) per dwelling per week as per WG Social Housing Rents Policy (inclusive of progression for tenants below target rents) as this will produce a sustainable Business Plan and continue to achieve & maintain CHS+;**
- 16.2 to continue with maximum progression permissible for rents below target, until target rents are achieved;**
- 16.3 to increase garage rents to £8.75 per week (from £8.50 in 2015/16) and garage bases to £2.20 per week (from £2.15 in 2015/16);**
- 16.4 to apply the service charge policy to ensure tenants who receive the benefit from specific services pay for those services;**
- 16.5 to increase charges for using our sewerage treatment works by 2.97%;**
- 16.6 to approve the proposed Capital Programme and applicable funding for 2016/17 and the indicative spends for 2017/18 and 2018/19 as set out in Appendix C;**
- 16.7 to approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2016/19 (2017/18 & 2018/19 being soft budgets) as set out in Appendix B.**

CHAIR

DATE