

EXECUTIVE BOARD

16 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole (Chair)

Councillors:

C.A. Campbell, G. Davies, H.A.L. Evans, P.M. Hughes, P. Hughes-Griffiths, D.M. Jenkins, L.M. Stephens and J. Tremlett.

Also in attendance:

Councillor D.M. Cundy.

The following Officers were in attendance:

W. Walters, Chief Executive;
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services;
R. Mullen, Director of Environment;
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);
D. Hockenfull, Marketing and Media Manager
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;
L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer;
R. Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer;
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer;
J. Corner, Technical Officer;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Virtual Meeting: - 10:00am - 10:40am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Linda Davies Evans, - Executive Board Member for Housing and Mr Jake Morgan - Director of Communities.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
Cefin Campbell	6 - Countryside Access Charging Policy – Public Path Furniture	A public footpath runs through land that he owns.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON THE 2ND NOVEMBER, 2020

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 2nd November, 2020 be signed as a correct record.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

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

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

6. COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS CHARGING POLICY - PUBLIC PATH FURNITURE

[Councillor Cefin Campbell, having earlier declared an interest in this item left the meeting and did not partake in the discussion or the vote thereof].

The Board considered a report providing details of a charging policy that had been developed by the Countryside Access service to introduce a means of recovering a portion of current expenditure on supplying and installing public path furniture on behalf of landowners.

The report highlighted that Section 146 of the Highways Act 1980 requires any stile or gate across a footpath, bridleway, or restricted byway to be maintained by the landowner.

The Board noted that the proposed policy had been carefully considered to introduce an appropriate and fair degree of cost recovery for furniture supply and installation by the Authority whilst formalising concessions in certain circumstances. In addition, the policy also served to provide a clear set of rules for furniture provision that would inform landowners of their statutory responsibilities and would assist Countryside Access staff in offering landowner support that was consistent, fair and reasonable.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the adoption of a Charging Policy for the supply and installation of public path furniture across the public rights of way network.

7. TOWY COMMUNITY CHURCH - XCEL BOWL

The Board considered a report which proposed to support an application received the Xcel Bowl Centre and the charitable arms of Towy Community Church to enable them to a continue to deliver the services provided to the residents of Carmarthenshire and neighbouring areas. The report sought the Executive Board's approval for a commitment of funding to be made available as a grant, to ensure the longer-term financial sustainability of the Xcel Bowls and associated projects.

The Board acknowledged that the Xcel Bowl and associated projects provided vital projects including a Foodbank, Community Shop, Furniture Recycling and had worked with over 50 active referral agencies in and around Carmarthen including the Council to meet the needs of disadvantaged families.

The Board recognised that the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown would have had a significant impact on many other projects and suggested that it would be prudent to develop a criteria in preparation for future requests for support.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to APPROVE:

- 7.1 that a commitment of £50,000 be given to Towy Community Church to support the Xcel Bowl and associated projects allowing them to continue to trade. This would be funded from departmental reserves. The funding would be given as a grant which will be drawn upon as required;**
- 7.2 that should Towy Community Church require additional funds to support their continued operation, an increase to their existing loan of up to £50,000 would be allowable.**

8. COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Executive Board considered the revenue budget monitoring report which provided the latest budgetary position as at 31st August 2020, in respect of 2020/2021. The budget position recognised the substantial additional pressures that had been placed on the Authority in responding to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Overall, the monitoring report forecasted an end of year overspend of £3,971k on the Authority's net revenue budget with an overspend at departmental level of £4,971k. The Executive Board noted that the unprecedented position was due to a combination of additional irrecoverable costs due to the Covid-19 activity, foregone income from services which had closed during the national lockdown and continued to experience reduced revenue, which may not be fully recompensed by Welsh Government (WG) and planned savings proposals which have been undeliverable due to the pandemic.

The report confirmed that the Authority was submitting a monthly hardship claim to Welsh Government for additional Covid-19 expenditure. The majority of costs were being refunded, though some were deemed ineligible, particularly linked to local decisions.

In light of the significant forecasted overspends at departmental level, Chief Officers and Heads of Service were asked to critically review options available to them to limit the forecasted overspend of budgets, whilst recognising the pressure Covid-19 had placed on the Authority's overall budget.

The Executive Board Member for Resources, in response to a query confirmed that the Welsh government were currently responding to address the issues arising within the leisure, culture and theatre sectors.

The Executive Board expressed their sincere thanks to the staff within the Corporate Services department for adapting to the new way of working throughout the pandemic and all their hard work in preparing the finances and managing Council expenditure.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 8.1 The Budget Monitoring report be received, and consideration given to the budgetary position and appropriate corrective action.**
- 8.2 Chief Officers and Heads of Service critically review options available to them to limit the forecasted overspend of budgets, whilst recognising the pressure Covid-19 has placed on the Authority's overall budget.**

9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 UPDATE

The Executive Board considered a report which provided an update of the latest budgetary position for the 2020/21 capital programme as at the 31st August, 2020 and detailed a set of virements which sought Executive Board approval.

It was reported that departmentally, a net spend of £63,428K was forecasted compared with a working net budget of £114,264K giving a -£50,836K variance.

The report highlighted the following additional Schemes, which had received direct funding, to the Capital Programme:-

- Private Housing;
- Flying Start;
- County Museum;
- Cross Hands East – Plot 3 and
- Re-fit Cymru.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 9.1 The capital programme update report be received.**
- 9.2 The virement detailed in the report be approved.**

10. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

CHAIR

DATE