

APPENDIX A(i)

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES		
EXECUTIVE BOARD		
1st FEBRUARY 2016		
<u>Capital Budget Consultations</u>		
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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BUDGET CONSULTATIONS COMMENTS

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6th JANUARY 2016

The Committee considered the 5 year capital programme which had been approved by the Executive Board for consultation on the 4th of January. It was advised that the timing of the provisional settlement had meant that this Scrutiny Committee was the only one being consulted however it was also planned to present the programme to a members’ seminar. The overall programme was more than £221m capital investment and was strongly linked to regeneration and job creation in the county. The EBM Resources added that he was keen to hear the Committee’s views.

It was asked whether or not it was intended to complete the Carmarthen West new school within the 5 year span of the programme and also if the external funding was the “roof tax” from the housing development. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the completion of the school was subject to the timing of the housing development build although the funding model provided the school within the 21st Century Band A programme timeline. The infrastructure needs would utilise the first tranche of the roof tax however subsequently the funds would be used for the school.

Recent press reports about the utilisation of an additional £20m of earmarked reserves to support the new capital programme were referred to and clarification requested about WG’s position in light of these. The Director of Corporate Services stated that reserves earmarked for the capital programme had been set aside for a number of years. A review of all earmarked reserves had been carried out, as had been undertaken in previous years and some, such as the reserve for job evaluation and single status, could now be released. The WG Minister might bring

in legislation following the Assembly elections requiring his approval to use reserves, however this Council would have a long term supported capital programme linked with regeneration and job creation and would be able to demonstrate the prudent and planned use of reserves.

It was asked if the £2m set aside each year for Disabled Facilities Grants was adequate to meet demand. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the overall programme was developed with departments input. Historical demand data showed that £2m was adequate however the situation would be monitored.

A question was asked whether or not the £300k budget for coastal erosion was sufficient given recent climatic events and flooding. The Director of Corporate Services stated that the bids from departments were assessed by the Strategic Asset Steering Group which also monitored the programme and would respond to any changes in demand.

Further information was requested in relation to the Tywi Valley Transport Corridor Concept. The Director of Corporate Services advised that this was a cycleway proposed from Carmarthen to Llandeilo planned over a number of years utilising the WG Local Transport Grant (LTG). The ACE Regeneration & Policy added that the project had huge links with tourism and other external funding sources were being investigated.

It was asked why the Ammanford Valley Distributor Road Phase 2 had not been considered a priority in the draft capital programme given the links with regeneration in the area, particularly in light of some of the projects included in the programme. The Director of Corporate Services stated that priority was given to projects with external funding. The Phase 2 project was linked with WG LTG and dependent on the timing of that being available. He added that the Wind Street/Tirydail Junction project in Ammanford was included and fully funded. The Chief Executive noted that Phase 2 was not high on the WG priority list and the Executive Board continued to lobby WG Transport Minister to place it higher up the list and provide the funding. A motion was proposed and seconded to ask the Executive Board to re-consider including the Ammanford Valley Distributor Road Phase 2 in the new capital programme. An amendment was proposed and seconded to add a request to the Executive Board to continue to lobby the WG for funding for the Phase 2 project.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

7.1 That the draft Five Year Capital Programme 2016/17 – 2020/21 be endorsed subject to 7.2.

7.2 To request that the Executive Board re-consider including the Ammanford Valley Distributor Road Phase 2 in the new capital programme and continue to lobby the Welsh Government for Local Transport Grant funding for the project.