

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday, 18 January 2021

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole (Chair);

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor D.M. Cundy and K. Lloyd;

The following Officers were in attendance:

W. Walters, Chief Executive

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services

R. Mullen, Director of Environment

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law

J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities

P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)

D. Hockenhill, Marketing and Media Manager

M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer

S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator

L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer

J. Corner, Technical Officer

E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Virtual Meeting: 10.00 am - 11.20 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interests.

3. MINUTES - 21ST DECEMBER 2020

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 21st December, 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. FOOD AND FEED SERVICE DELIVERY 2020-21

The Executive Board considered a report detailing a proposed plan for food and feed advisory/official control work based on Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance up to the 31 March 2021. As a result of COVID-19 officers from the Food Safety and Health section, who, ordinarily, would have been implementing the food and feed official controls (inspections), had, over the last six months, been involved in implementing the COVID relevant legislation. They had also been deployed/seconded into the Infection Prevention and Control Team. The Food, Safety and Health team was now, however, in a position where advisory/official controls for food and feed could be reinstated and implemented. The FSA had recently provided guidance for the delivery of official food controls in the context of the ongoing response to the COVID -19 pandemic.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the proposals for the advisory/official controls at food and feed businesses up to 31 March 2021 be approved.

7. TRANSITIONAL HOMELESSNESS PLAN

The Executive Board considered a report which provided an update on the continued impact of COVID-19 on homelessness provision, particularly in relation to single people, a bid to Welsh Government for funding to assist in developing plans to tackle additional demand and plans to re-house and support single homelessness people particularly over the next 12 months and into the future. Welsh Government had agreed to continue to fund additional B & B provision from the Emergency Homelessness Provision. This would amount to approximately £350,000 by the end of March 2021.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

7.1 to note the continued impact of Covid-19 on homelessness provision;

7.2 to note the outcome of a bid to Welsh Government for additional support and progress made regarding the Authority's homeless plans;

7.3 to approve a variation of the Access to Social Housing Policy to undertake a pilot exercise to help re-house single homeless households in Council stock including:

- **Using 6 vacant upper floor two-bedroom flats for single people; and**
- **Using 3 vacant houses where two single people are given the opportunity to share a tenancy;**

7.4 that investigation be undertaken with a view to buying single person accommodation in the private sector as part of the Authority's general plans to increase stock numbers.

8. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2021/22 TO 2023/24

The Board considered a report providing an overview of the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2021/22 and the following two financial years. The report provided details of the budget process, the current Welsh Government provisional settlement and the Final settlement timetable and identified the validation and budget pressures that needed to be considered by members in setting next year's revenue budget. The report would form the basis of the budget consultation process which would be undertaken during January and February 2021.

The report indicated that, after adjustments for WG identified transfers, the increase in the provisional settlement for Carmarthenshire was 3.8% (£10.466

million). The Aggregate External Finance (AEF) had therefore increased to £284.820 million in 2021/22 which included £244k in respect of Teachers pay.

It was noted that whilst significant work had already been undertaken in preparing the budget, this report was only an initial position statement which would be updated over the coming months as the budget was further developed, council members were engaged, public consultation took place and the final settlement was expected to be received from Welsh Government on 2nd March 2021.

The Leader thanked all Council staff for their dedication and hard work in maintaining care and support for communities in Carmarthenshire during the current Covid pandemic. He added that whilst he recognised the reasons, both in terms of prudence and fiscal responsibility, why officers were recommending a Council Tax of 4.89% in the report he proposed a motion, given the circumstances surrounding Covid 19 and its effect on so many people in the county, that the Council Tax be reduced to 4.48%. The motion was duly seconded.

It was clarified by the Director of Corporate Services that the proposed reduction in Council Tax to 4.48% would be considered as part of the budget finalisation process over the next month in conjunction with the consultation feedback where final budget proposals and options will be presented to Executive Board late February, therefore ensuring a balanced budget is presented to County Council.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and, subject to the Council Tax being reduced to 4.48% [rather than 4.89% as set out in the report], the 2021/22 to 2023/24 budget strategy be approved as a basis for consultation specifically seeking comments from consultees on the efficiency proposals detailed within Appendix A to the report.

9. FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME (COUNCIL FUND) - 2021/22 TO 2025/26

The Executive Board considered a report detailing the latest proposals for the Five-Year Capital Programme (Council Fund) 2021/22 to 2025/2026 which would form the basis of the budget consultation process with members and other relevant parties. Feedback from this consultation process, along with any updates on the settlement figures and grant applications, would inform the final Capital Programme budget report which would be presented to the Executive Board in February 2021 and County Council in March 2021.

The proposed gross expenditure on the capital programme for 2021/22 was £127.1m with the projected funding being £63.854m from the county council's own resources through the use of borrowing, capital receipts, reserves and general capital grant and the balance of funding of £63.239m coming from external sources. These figures included projects delayed in 2020/21, mainly because of Covid-19 restrictions, that had been carried over and build into the budgets of future years.

The capital programme was projected to be fully funded over the five years. It included projected expenditure on the Swansea Bay City Region Deal projects against which the authority would borrow, with the funding being returned from both Welsh and UK governments over a 15 years period (from 2018/19).

Whilst disappointment was expressed over the proposal to reduce Council funding for the Towy Valley Path due to the difficulties of securing external funding the Leader gave an assurance that the Authority remained firmly

committed to the project, particularly in terms of safe travel, and would continue to make the case to Welsh Government for support.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to endorse the report as a provisional capital programme for consultation purposes, including consideration by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3rd February.

- 10. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972**

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

CHAIR

DATE