

Executive Board

Monday, 25 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 R. James;

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;
J. Jones, Head of Regeneration;
S. Pilliner, Head of Transportation & Highways;
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);
D. Hockenhull, Marketing and Media Manager;
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer;
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer;
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer;
J. Corner, Technical Officer;
L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer;
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Virtual Meeting: 10.00 am - 10.40 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Member	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
E. Dole	5 – Renewal Ballot of the Llanelli Business Improvement District (BID)	Has represented the Council on the BID Group.

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 had been received.

5. RENEWAL BALLOT OF THE LLANELLI BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

[NOTE: Councillor E. Dole had earlier declared a non prejudicial interest in this item.]

The Executive Board considered a report seeking support for 'Ymlaen Llanelli' to undertake a renewal ballot for the Llanelli Business Improvement District (BID) for a new 5-year term from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2026.

Since its inception the BID had sought to improve Llanelli as a place for people to live work and visit. Over the proposed second five-year delivery period of the BID it was estimated that £456,095 would be collected via a 1.25% levy on the rateable value of commercial properties within the BID delivery area which would be reinvested in projects and services that benefited businesses within the town centre.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 5.1 to support the holding of a formal ballot by 'Ymlaen Llanelli' on whether or not the town's eligible rateable businesses wish to renew the Llanelli Business Improvement District for a second 5-year term to run from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2026;**
- 5.2 to support the principle of the proposed BID's second term and voting in respect of its 24 affected Council owned rateable properties within the BID zone (estimated annual levy charge of £14,841.25 plus inflation at 2% pa);**
- 5.3 to agree to the principle of undertaking the BID levy collection as detailed in the Operational Agreement on behalf of 'Ymlaen Llanelli' at a cost of circa £3,494.98 per annum;**
- 5.4 to approve the Statement of Baseline services to the BID company appended to the report;**
- 5.5 that Cllr. E. Dole be nominated to sit on the BID Company Board;**
- 5.6 to agree to manage the BID ballot process at no fee on behalf of 'Ymlaen Llanelli'.**

6. WALES GOVERNMENT BUS EMERGENCY SCHEME 2

The Executive Board considered a report setting out the wider context, the background to, and reasons for the Wales Government' Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) and seeking its agreement to sign up to the BES2 scheme. The scheme was required to ensure services were sustained. Any reduction in BES2 funding not covered by an uptake in farebox revenue would place pressure on any Council subsidised bus contracts. It was emphasised that without BES2 support the bus industry would not survive the crisis and many public transport routes would be lost.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 6.1 to agree to the principles of the BES2 agreement to secure (conditional) financial support for the bus sector and to establish a relationship with their regional lead authority and signatory, that ensures that the ongoing emergency funding meets the authority's priorities and is delivered on its behalf.**

6.2 that the requirement for the current legal agreement for the Bus Services Support Grant to be updated to reflect the requirements for the BES2 agreement be noted;

6.3 that a further report be considered in due course on wider bus reform proposals relating to the future management of bus services in Wales following the WLGA meeting with Executive Board Members and the Minister early in 2021.

7. COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Executive Board considered the revenue budget monitoring report which provided the latest budgetary position as at 31st October 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 £1,226k on the Authority's net revenue budget with an overspend at departmental level of £2,426k. The Executive Board noted that the unprecedented position was due to a combination of additional irrecoverable costs due to the Covid-19 activity, the foregone income from services which had closed during the national lockdowns and continued to experience reduced revenue which may not be fully recompensed by Welsh Government (WG) and planned savings proposals which had either been reduced or delayed due to the pandemic or may be undeliverable due to current service operations.

The Authority continued to submit a monthly hardship claim to Welsh Government for additional Covid-19 expenditure. Whilst the majority of costs were being refunded, some were deemed ineligible, particularly those linked to local decisions.

In light of the significant forecasted overspends at departmental level, Chief Officers and Heads of Service had been 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 Chair advised that Councillor R. James had sought permission in accordance with CPR 11.1 to ask a question in relation to this item.

Councillor James referred to the proposal in the draft budget to save in the region of £1m within the school rationalisation programme and asked when more details on the future of education provision in Carmarthenshire be available.

The Executive Board Member for Resources responded that the report before the Board related to the current year's budget and that the draft budget was presently the subject of consultation during which period members would have the opportunity to raise issues such as the above. The Director of Education & Children's Services explained that numerous schemes were being explored which involved investment in school buildings across the county. Proposals currently forming part of the budget consultation exercise included a review of the county's primary school footprint and investment in the delivery of more sustainable education provision.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

7.1 The Budget Monitoring report be received, and consideration given to the budgetary position and appropriate corrective action.

7.2 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.

8. 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 October, 2020 and detailed a set of virements which sought Executive Board approval.

It was reported that departmentally, a net spend of £51,198k was forecasted compared with a working net budget of £114,351k giving a -£63,153k variance.

The report highlighted one virement that required approval and the following additional Schemes, which had received direct funding, to the Capital Programme:-

- Public Sector Housing;
- Rights of Way Access Improvement Grant;
- Llyn Llech Owain Country Park.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

8.1 The capital programme update report be received.

8.2 The virement detailed in the report be approved.

9. 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