

CABINET

13TH SEPTEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole (Chair)

Councillors:

C.A. Davies, 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.

The following Officers were in attendance:

W. Walters, Chief Executive;
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services;
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services;
R. Mullen, Director of Environment;
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;
J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities;
D. Hockenhull, Marketing and Media Manager;
R. S. Waters, Highways and Transportation Services Manager;
L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer;
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer [Assisting];
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer [Assisting];
R. Morris, Member Support Officer [Webcasting];
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer [Minute taker].
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator.

Virtual Meeting:- 10:00am - 11:23am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interests.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON THE 26TH JULY 2021

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 26th July, 2021 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. HANDLING PERSONAL DATA POLICY

The Cabinet considered a report which provided information on a new 'Handling Personal Data Policy' which would replace the existing 'Handling Personal Information Policy' and 'Procedure and Breach Reporting & Response Policy', both of which had exceeded their review dates and required updating. Cabinet Members noted that the new policy reflected the changes in working practices, the use of new IT and decisions and guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Handling Personal Data Policy be approved.

7. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

The Cabinet considered the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2020-21, and the Action Plan for 2021-24, which detailed how the Council had implemented its Strategic Equality Plan and fulfilled its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties for Wales.

The report outlined the work implemented during the first year of the revised Strategic Equality Plan and the new Strategic Equality Objectives for 2020-24, which were as follows:-

1. Being a leading employer
2. The needs and rights of people with Protected Characteristics shape the design of services
3. Safe and Cohesive communities that are resilient, fair, and equal
4. Improving access to our services and access to our environment.

Reflecting on the impact that the pandemic on had on the communities and citizens within Carmarthenshire, it was reported that due regard would be given to the responsibilities under the Equality Act and the Public Sector Duties and that protected groups would be involved in the rebuilding and recovering of services. Furthermore, it was highlighted that 2020-21 was the Council's first year of implementing its Diversity and Equality Promotion Calendar and the Flag and illumination protocol.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be approved.

8. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE 2020-21

The Cabinet considered the Annual Report in relation to the Welsh language and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards during 2020-21. The Report had been produced in order to comply with the Welsh Language Commissioner's monitoring arrangements.

Cabinet members noted that as well as focusing on what had been achieved despite the practical barriers brought by the lockdown period, case studies included within the report highlighted a number of new innovative online learning methods that had been successfully implemented from the new opportunities that came as a result of the pandemic.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Annual report on the Welsh Language 2020-21 be received.

9. COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - 2020/2021

The Cabinet considered the Council's Revenue Budget Monitoring Report which provided members with an end of year financial position in respect of 2020/21.

The budget position recognised the substantial additional pressures that had been placed on the Authority in responding to the COVID19 pandemic as well as the additional funding support provided by Welsh Government.

It was reported that the final outturn figures indicated an underspend for the year at departmental level of £1,434k. After taking account of the underspend on capital charges and the movement in both Earmarked and Departmental reserves, the net position for the Authority was at an £814k underspend.

In addition, the report included details on the expenditure and income in respect of Covid-19.

Cabinet Members noted that the underspend was due to a combination of the substantial additional grant funding received from Welsh Government before year end, which also included funding for schools of approximately £5m. The additional COVID19 related costs and lost income which was largely refunded under the Welsh Government hardship scheme. Services had been paused or reduced due to the lockdown measures and social distancing and staffing vacancies.

Members also noted that the Council Tax collection was down on budgeted levels, though the reduction was able to be covered from the specific funding provided by Welsh Government.

The Housing Revenue Account appended to the report at Appendix B reported an underspend of £3,0603k for 2020/21. It was reported that this was a result of a general reduction in demand due to COVID19, with only emergency and legislative servicing being undertaken for significant periods.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Council's Revenue Budget Monitoring for Year End 2020-21 be received.

10. COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - 1ST APRIL 2021 - 30TH JUNE 2021

The Cabinet considered the revenue budget monitoring report which provided the latest budgetary position as at 30th June 2021, in respect of 2021/2022. Whilst the scale of COVID19 response was reducing, the budget position recognised the ongoing financial pressures faced by the Authority as well as the additional funding support provided by Welsh Government.

Overall, the monitoring report forecasted an underspend for the year at departmental level of £285k with a forecasted underspend on the Authority's net revenue budget of £508k. It was reported that this was due to a combination of additional COVID-19 related costs and lost income which was largely refunded under the Welsh Government hardship scheme. Also, some services were either paused or impacted by lockdown measures and social distancing during quarter 1.

Cabinet Members noted that in respect of April-June budgets, additional expenditure and income loss an approximate total of £6 million had been claimed under the Welsh Government hardship scheme.

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to the fact that Council Tax collection remained below budgeted levels, which would continue to be monitored closely by the Director of Corporate Services, particularly as the furlough scheme approaches an end.

In noting that the forecasted overspend of £273k within the Leisure and Culture Services, and that the recovery of lost income was currently being funded by the Welsh Government until 30th September 2021, it was reported that staff were actively developing innovative ideas in order to promote and encourage the public to return to leisure facilities across Carmarthenshire in order to increase income revenue.

The Housing Revenue Account reported a predicted underspend of £1,476k for 2021/22 details of which were provided within Appendix B appended to the report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 10.1 The Budget Monitoring report be received, and consideration given to the budgetary position and appropriate corrective action.**
- 10.2 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.**

11. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 UPDATE

The Cabinet considered a report which provided an update of the latest budgetary position for the 2021/22 capital programme as at the 30th June, 2021.

Departmentally, a net spend of £91,568k was forecasted compared with a working net budget of £130,490k giving a -£38,922k variance. Cabinet Members noted that the variance projected at this time related mainly to delays with the Pentre Awel development and with some school developments due to the restrictions associated with the COVID19 pandemic.

The net budget included original HRA and General Fund programme, approved by Council on 3rd March, slippage from 2020/21. It was reported that some of the budgets had also been amended to account for differences in actual grant allocations compared with the anticipated allocations at the time the programme was approved.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Capital Programme 2021/22 Update be received.

12. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2020-2021

As part of the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Cabinet considered the Council's Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for the 2020-21.

The Council adopted the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and the five year capital programme for 2020-21 on the 3rd March 2020. The Annual report listed the activities that took place in 2020-21.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for 2020-21 be adopted.

13. TYISHA/STATION ROAD AREA

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's proposals for the Tyisha/Station Road Area of Llanelli. The report detailed the work undertaken to date, including the pending demolition of the vacant flats in the 4 "Ty's", together with outlining other key priorities for moving the programme of change forward.

The report provided detailed information on Llanelli, the vision for Tyisha, housing and the regeneration of Tyisha as well as information on the design and how to submit views and ideas.

Cabinet Members noted that the Tyisha area in Llanelli provided a vital link between the plans for the proposed Pentre Awel Village and Llanelli Town Centre. It was reported that one of the proposal's key objectives aimed to develop a transformational plan to address the significant issues affecting the Tyisha community and making the area a vibrant place to live and work.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 13.1 the progress achieved to date, and to approve including the demolition and clearance of the “4 Ty’s” site be noted;**
- 13.2 the key priorities moving forward be approved;**
- 13.3 the soft market test approach and associated marketing brochure be agreed and;**
- 13.4 the future governance arrangements for the programme be agreed.**

14. CARTREFI CROESO

The Cabinet considered a report on Cartrefi Croeso, the Council’s Local Housing Company, established in 2018 to support the Council in delivering affordable homes for sale and rent thereby ensuring a range of options to help it deliver on its affordable homes commitment in meeting affordable housing needs and aspirations, supporting economic growth and strategic regeneration.

The report detailed the progress achieved by Cartrefi Croeso to date and addressed its future role in light of different circumstances that had arisen subsequent to its initial establishment. In addition, the report explained how the Council itself would now take a lead on all future mixed tenure affordable housing developments as a result of significantly developing skills and future capacity. This would enable the delivery of new affordable homes to continue to play a major contribution to the economic recovery of the County, post COVID.

The Cabinet considered the proposed future approach which would enable the Council to lead on all mixed tenure affordable housing developments. This approach would enable the Council itself to maximise all funding opportunities, plan, commission and deliver all affordable housing delivery throughout the county strategically. Cabinet Members noted that this option would significantly reduce the on-going costs of the Company. In order to ensure that the opportunity to utilise the Company should future circumstances dictate, and should it be considered appropriate to do so, the report proposed that Cartrefi Croeso be made dormant but kept in existence on the register of companies at Companies House.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

- 14.1 That the progress made to date on Cartrefi Croeso’s mixed tenure affordable housing developments be noted;**
- 14.2 To confirm that the Council takes on all future mixed tenure affordable housing developments and Cartrefi Croeso, as a company, is made dormant but kept in existence on the register of companies at Companies House be agreed;**
- 14.3 To implement the legal process for Cartrefi Croeso to cease trading but be retained as a ‘dormant’ company, in case the Council wants to**

sell homes through this delivery vehicle at some point in the future;

14.4 To allow the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Director of Corporate Services, and in line with existing delegations, to act on behalf of the shareholder (The Council) with relation to the Shareholder Agreement.

15. COVID-19 PUBLIC REALM MEASURES

The Cabinet considered a report which provided options along with recommendations on measures which were introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford town centres.

Cabinet Members noted that a public and business consultation exercise was undertaken between the 16th November 2020 and the 4th January 2021 which was undertaken online due to covid restrictions. The main findings were summarised with the full report of the consultation appended to the report.

It was reported that many of the public realm changes were underpinned through legal orders drafted on either a temporary or experimental basis which were valid for up to 18 months from the start of August 2020 with the following changes within the town centres being implemented:-

- Speed Limits – Temporary Orders
- Parking changes –Experimental Orders
- Prohibition of Driving and Access – Temporary Orders

Speed Limits – Temporary Orders: Traffic management interventions of reduced speed limit to 20mph offer long term road safety and active travel benefits and were in line with the proposed Welsh Government legislation for 20mph speed limits in urban areas. The report recommended that the current temporary speed limit orders, due to expire in January 2022, be made permanent through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order process as stated in schedule 1 within the report.

Parking changes –Experimental Orders: A number of parking area changes had proven particularly successful, and the report suggested that these be made permanent, listed in Schedule 2 of the report. Whereas others that had been less successful and should be removed. Listed in Schedule 3 of the report.

Prohibition of Driving and Access – Temporary Orders: The report outlined options in relation to Traffic Management (Access Only) and Pedestrianisation.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

15.1 the speed limits set out in Schedule 1 be promoted as permanent speed limits.

15.2 the parking areas set out in Schedule 2 as Experimental Orders be confirmed as permanent, and Traffic Regulation Orders created accordingly.

- 15.3 the parking areas in Carmarthen be effectively removed as set out in Schedule 3.**
- 15.4 the temporary 'Access Only' traffic order on Water Street, Carmarthen be promoted as permanent and enforced.**
- 15.5 the pedestrianisation measures in Carmarthen and Llanelli town centres be removed as no longer necessary for covid related reasons (Option 2).**

Prior to closing the meeting, with the Chairs consent, Councillor Tremlett announced that on Wednesday, 8th September, 2021 the County Council and Delta Wellbeing had jointly been awarded the Silver award in the Innovation category for the Connect Programme at the Public Sector Transformation Awards ceremony held in London. The Leader, on behalf of the Cabinet expressed congratulations to the team.”

CHAIR

DATE