

COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 1 MARCH 2023

PRESENT: Councillor R.E. Evans (Chair)(In Person)

Councillors (In Person):

S.M. Allen	P. Cooper	C.A. Davies	B. Davies
G. Davies	K. Davies	L. Davies	M. Donoghue
L.D. Evans	N. Evans	P.M. Hughes	R. James
G.H. John	D. Jones	H. Jones	A. Lenny
N. Lewis	A. Leyshon	K. Madge	D. Nicholas
M. Palfreman	B.D.J. Phillips	D. Price	B.A.L. Roberts
E. Skinner	D. Thomas	E.G. Thomas	G.B. Thomas
M. Thomas	J. Tremlett	A. Vaughan Owen	

Councillors (Virtually):

K.V. Broom	J.M. Charles	M.D. Cranham	D.M. Cundy
S.A. Curry	A. Davies	W.R.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies
L.M. Davies	S.L. Davies	T. Davies	A. Evans
D.C. Evans	H.A.L. Evans	W.T. Evans	A.D. Harries
J.P. Hart	T.M. Higgins	J.K. Howell	P. Hughes-Griffiths
J.D. James	M. James	J.P. Jenkins	B.W. Jones
A.C. Jones	G.R. Jones	M.J.A. Lewis	A.G. Morgan
D. Owen	S.L. Rees	H.B. Shepardson	R. Sparks
F. Walters	P.T. Warlow	D.E. Williams	J. Williams

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services
R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

K. Evans, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
J. Owens, Democratic Services Officer
S. Hendy, Member Support Officer
R. Morris, Members Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 am - 2.10 pm

(Note:

- At 12:55pm the Council's attention was drawn to Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 9 – Duration of Meeting and, as the meeting would have been underway for three hours at 1:10pm, it was resolved to suspend standing orders, in accordance with CPR 23.1, to enable the remaining business on the agenda to be considered.
- The Council also adjourned at 12.55 for a 20 minute comfort break]

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Bowen, C. Davies, H. Davies, S. Godfrey-Coles, E. Rees and J. Seward.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
A Vaughan-Owen	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Wife is a primary school head teacher
L.M. Davies	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Husband teaches as a head of Music
N. Evans	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter works for the library service
R. Evans	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter works for the library service
L.D. Evans	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter is a teacher
H. Shepardson	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter is a teacher
H. Shepardson	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Member of the Fire Authority
G. Morgan	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Tenant at Delta Lakes
T. Higgins	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Niece works in the library service
D.C. Evans	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Wife works in the Council's Contact Centre
K. Broom	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Member of the Fire Authority
K. Broom	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter works in Social Care
J. Hart	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Sister is a teacher
B. Jones	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Son is a Head Teacher
P. Warlow	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Wife works in Social Care
A Evans	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Mother works in the Chief Executive's Department
F. Walters	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Family members are teachers

A Leyshon	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter works in the library service
D. Nicholas	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter works in the Planning Department
C.A. Jones	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Daughter-in-law works in Education
E. Williams	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Chair of the Fire Authority
D. Cundy	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Relatives work for the Council
E. Skinner	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Niece works for the Authority
R. Sparks	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Has a business in the leisure industry and has dispensation to speak but not vote
L. Roberts	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Family members work for the Council
G.B. Thomas	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Member of the Fire Authority
M. Palfreman	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Runs a Social Care Consultancy Business – Has dispensation to speak but not vote
B. Davies	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Wife works for Social Care
G. John	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Family Members work for the Authority
T.A.J. Davies	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Sister-in-Law works for the Council
Andrew Davies	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Wife is a Teacher
J. James	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Son-in-Law works for the Authority
R. James	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Partner works for the Authority
P.M. Hughes	5.1 – Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26	Family Member works for the Council
M. Charles	7.1 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Rob James, Deryk Cundy, Andrew Davies and Arwel Davies	Is a landowner and previously expressed an opinion on the matter. Has dispensation to speak but not vote
C.A. Davies	7.1 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Rob James, Deryk Cundy, Andrew Davies and Arwel Davies	Has dispensation to speak but not vote

H. Jones	7.1 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Rob James, Deryk Cundy, Andrew Davies and Arwel Davies	Has Dispensation to speak but not vote
W.T. Evans	7.1 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Rob James, Deryk Cundy, Andrew Davies and Arwel Davies	
M. Charles	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Is a landowner – has dispensation to speak and vote
C.A. Davies	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has dispensation to speak and vote
Andrew Davies	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has dispensation to speak and vote
B. Davies	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has dispensation to speak and vote
T.A.J. Davies	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has cattle on the farm. Has dispensation to speak and vote
H.A.L Evans	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has dispensation to speak and vote
L.D. Evans	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Close family member who farms. Has dispensation to speak and vote
W.T. Evans	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has dispensation to speak and vote

J.K. Howell	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Is a Farmer. Has dispensation to speak and vote
H. Jones	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has dispensation to speak and vote
J. Lewis	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has cattle on the farm. Has dispensation to speak and vote
G.B. Thomas	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Has dispensation to speak and vote
S.M. Allen	7.2 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies	Husband is a vet and involved with TB eradication and treatment

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- The Chair reported on his attendance at a recent visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales to the Wales Air Ambulance Station in Dafen, Llanelli,
- The Chair welcomed to the meeting Magda Smith, Marianna Pilichowska, Tom Vaughan-Jones, Jacob Eatly and Iestyn Davies, members of the Youth Council who were working towards their Councillor Shadowing Award that recognised young people's understanding and involvement in local democracy,
- Councillor Gareth Thomas extended his congratulations to the staff and pupils at Hendy Primary School on winning Heno's 'Carol yr Wyl 2022 (Carol of Christmas) competition.

4. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 25TH JANUARY 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 25th January, 2023 be signed as a correct record.

5. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

5.1. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2025/26

(NOTE: Councillors A Vaughan Owen, L.M. Davies, N. Evans, R. Evans, L.D. Evans, H. Shephardson, G. Morgan, T. Higgins, D.C. Evans, K. Broom, J. Hart, B. Jones, P. Warlow, A. Evans, F. Walters, A. Leyshon, D. Nicholas, C.A. Jones, E. Williams, D. Cundy, E. Skinner, R. Sparks, L. Roberts, G. Thomas, M. Palfreman, B. Davies, G. John, T.A.J. Davies, Andrew Davies, J. James R. James and P.M. Hughes had earlier declared an interest in this item remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon)

Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 20th February 2023 (Minute 5 Refers) had considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 and made a number of recommendations, as detailed within the report of the Director of Corporate Services, for Council's consideration.

The Council received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Resources, on behalf of the Cabinet, in which he set out the background to the budget proposals being presented to the Council for consideration together with the responses received to the budget consultation.

It was explained that with the Welsh Governments budget process being much later than normal, the report being presented to Council that day had been prepared prior to the Welsh Government announcing its final settlement figures on the 28th February. Nevertheless, it had been possible for some of the key components of the Council's budget assumptions and allocations to be reviewed. That had enabled some of the original proposals in the budget outline to be revisited and for further options to be considered and presented as part of the report to Council. On an all-Wales basis, whilst the provisional settlement figures reflected a 7.9% funding increase, with Carmarthenshire having received an 8.5% uplift, the final settlement figure had also provided Carmarthenshire with an additional £10.7k which would be added to its contingency budget.

Due to the lateness of the final settlement, Council was advised that the report provided for delegation to be granted to the Director of Corporate Services, in liaison with the Leader, Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Resources to make any adjustments as necessary, upon receiving the final settlement. Whilst the Council had been informed of those amendments that day, the Director would still need to follow those adjustments through in the budget tables following its meeting. The Director had also adjusted some of the other figures within the strategy as part of the normal routine as clearer and more information had become available, with the current total validation having added more than £30m on to the budget.

The Cabinet Member advised that although the report maintained a pay assumption of 5% for 2023/24 for both NJC, as well as teaching staff, the national employers in respect of NJC staff had, subsequent to the Cabinet's meeting on the 20th February, made a cash offer to the Trade Unions similar to 2022/23. That offer was estimated to reflect a 6.7% increase resulting in a 1.7% shortfall equivalent to approximately £3m on net budgets. With that offer having only recently been made, the Welsh Government had not been able to consider how it may be supported given the fact it was again above almost all Local Authorities assumptions. As a consequence, it was considered prudent for the

Cabinet Member for Resources together with the Director to give consideration on how to accommodate the additional budgetary pressure, especially as Welsh Government funding was unclear with the Director having advised the Council would need to use a combination of the following measures to fund the shortfall, should it be accepted:

- Allocate £1m from the contingency budget,
- Utilise the National Non Domestic Rate revaluation adjustment, estimated at around £500k and,
- Allocate £1.5m from general balances, if it was not possible to recover the funding from underspends during the year,

Whilst the above proposal was not considered an ideal scenario it was considered to be a practical and prudent approach at the current point in the budget process. Additionally, the Authority also had to recognise the potential risk of negotiations going further during the forthcoming year.

With regard to the teachers' pay awards, an offer of 1.5% consolidated and 1.5% unconsolidated had been put forward by the Welsh Government Minister in respect of the pay settlement applicable from last September. As the Authority had accommodated a 5% increase within its budget strategy, there was a potential shortfall in the region of £1.9m. Whilst it was expected Welsh Government would fund a substantial part of the additional offer, nothing had formally been confirmed at the present time and the position would need to be monitored during the year, as negotiations were finalised.

The Council was advised that the budget proposals had been widely consulted on for nearly six weeks with approximately 2,000 responses having been received. Meetings had been held with the Leader of the Opposition and their Resources Spokesperson. Additionally, 80 young people from the Council's secondary schools had met with cabinet members and officers to express their views on budget priorities. It had become evident from all who participated in the consultation they appreciated that difficult choices that had to be made.

As referenced above, the Council was advised that changes to some of the key assumptions such as pay and income calculations, updated energy prices based on the latest information, and the release of capital charges had enabled some changes to be made to the final budget proposals, as detailed in paragraph 3.2.5 of the report, resulting in a total sum of almost £1.8m being available to make changes to next year's budget. Accordingly, the Cabinet had recommended that to make best use of that sum the following adjustments be made to the Budget Strategy, that took account of the consultation process and responded to the feedback received from both public and councillors:

Firstly:

£1.3million be provided to remove or reduce the 9 specific budget reductions on paragraph 3.2.5 including:

- keeping St Clears Leisure centre open whilst we work with the community to set it on a viable financial path,

- restoring 1/4 of a million pounds back to children's and youth services to invest in the prevention agenda,

- lessening the impact on both the school music service and learning disability services.

- reducing the financial ask on schools by £700,000, and also deferring any changes to the rising 4s policy by a year to ensure wider consultation and allowing the proper time to plan any possible changes.

Secondly:

- The Introduction of charging at the 9 car parks that were currently free be deferred, to allow the Authority time to assess and consider the wider impact on the individual areas. The value of the deferment in year 1 was £10k. and

- The withdrawal of the reduction of £22k in the Welsh Language budget under the Corporate Policy section, which was used to support projects and commission related work and research.

Thirdly,

that £385k be used to support both hard working families and businesses by restricting car park charges and school meals to a 5% increase, half the current rate of inflation.

Fourthly,

responding to concerns over highways and town centres, that £262k is allocated directly towards these priorities. We recognise that Welsh Government had suffered a significant contraction in its capital budgets, and therefore some of the historical support provided for public realm works had dried up in recent years – this funding allocation will act as at least partial mitigation.

Finally, and most importantly, that left sufficient funding available to reduce the council tax increase to 6.8% for next year which it was felt struck the right balance in terms of protecting vital services which our citizens rely upon and look to the council to deliver each and every day.

The Cabinet Member advised that adopting the proposals would allow the Council to present a fair and balanced budget for next year, that responded to the views fed back from the consultation. If all the proposals outlined in the report and summarised to the County Council were implemented, he confirmed a sustainable and viable Budget Strategy would be provided which:

- Responded to the consultation,
- Ensured, as far as possible, that service level and standards were maintained,
- Recognised that citizens were finding it hard in the current climate and ensured core services were protected,
- As far as possible prepared the Authority for the significant uncertainties that lay ahead.

However, he also advised that unlike previous years, the recent pay award was a significant financial risk to the budget moving forward and whilst the management of that additional cost in the current year had been addressed, the level of additional cost and uncertainty presented a significant risk to the medium term sustainability of services in the years 2025/26 onwards, depending on the future Welsh Government settlements that would require careful monitoring during the forthcoming years.

In concluding the Cabinet Member, on behalf of the Cabinet, moved the Budget Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 recommendations as noted in the report, setting a Band D Council Tax for 2023/24 of £1,490.97, which was an increase of 6.8 %.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Cabinet be adopted and approved:

“the Budget Strategy for 2023/24, which includes the amendments at paragraph 4.1.4;

the Band D Council Tax for 2023/24 be set at £1,490.97 (an increase of 6.80%);

The removal of specific savings proposals as identified in paragraph 3.2.5 of the report with the following amendments;

- i) To defer until 2024/25 the introduction of new charges at 9 car parks that are currently free to allow the authority to assess and consider the wider impact on the individual areas on a case-by-case basis. The value of the deferment in year 1 is £10k,**
- ii) To remove the £22k Welsh Language saving from the Corporate Policy Budget**

the restriction of income uplifts to school meals and car parks as identified in paragraph 3.2.5;

The discretionary allocation of pressures funding to highways and town centres as identified in paragraph 3.2.5 amended to a value of £262k to accommodate the two changes proposed by Cabinet

the Medium Term Financial Plan which will form the basis for future years financial planning;

the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, be granted delegated authority to make any amendments necessary as a consequence of the Welsh Government final settlement due on the 1st March 2023”.

5.2. FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME (COUNCIL FUND) 2023/24 - 2027/28

Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 20th February 2023 (Minute 6 refers) had considered the Five Year Capital Programme (Council Fund) 2023/24 to 2027/28 taking into account the consultation exercise undertaken and the revenue implications arising from the capital programme.

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented to the Council, on behalf of the Cabinet, the report on the Five Year Capital Programme which would see £265m of investment over the next five years, £73m of which was for the continued commitment for improving our school buildings, £27m for Regeneration projects to boost economic activity, £86m for City Deal backed projects which included a new leisure centre for Llanelli, and £59m to improve the local economic infrastructure and wider environment. The programme provided a comprehensive and wide-ranging package supported by funding from the Welsh Government, the UK government, and the council's own resources.

It was noted that the detailed provisional capital programme had been presented to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30th January for consultation. Following concerns about the lack of Provision for flood prevention and the lack of Welsh Government grant funding for decarbonisation measures, the programme had been revised to include further commitments in those areas. No other matters of concern were raised during this consultation and an extract from the relevant minute of the meeting was included in Appendix B for information.

It was reported that as the previous capital programme focused support for businesses on the need to boost the local economy that remained the focus as the Council continued to maintain support for the local economy with major investments in levelling up projects and continued support for investment in infrastructure.

The programme included three ongoing transformational projects each focused on a different primary town area.

Firstly - the agreement to start construction on Zone One of the Pentre Awel development in Llanelli had been signed, at a contract price of £86m creating five dedicated buildings associated with "street" space, which would also include an aquatic centre, sports hall, multipurpose sports and fitness rooms and gymnasium, education and training facilities, clinical and research provision, and innovation and business space. The project would transform the landscape and economy of south Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, and a greater part of West Wales.

Secondly, a £19.6m hub would be provided at the heart of Carmarthen Town Centre boosting footfall in the town centre as the Council built back from the pandemic providing a home for the County's art collection, health and education facilities as well as being the new home to the authority's Carmarthen Hwb and retail units. The investment would also act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town centre.

Thirdly, a £19m investment to complete the Tywi Valley Path within the Dinefwr area would bring significant benefits to the rural economy and improvements to health and wellbeing of residents.

The Cabinet Member advised that in addition to these large flagship projects, the Council would continue to support its ongoing programmes of investments in infrastructure and property portfolio in year five of the programme:

The programme would continue to support Schools and Sustainable Communities for Learning which, in recent years, had seen the completion of new school buildings and refurbishment across the county, most recently with the opening of the new Ysgol Gynradd Gorslas, and Ysgol Gynradd Pum Heol and the current construction of Ysgol Pembrey. Provision was therefore made in the programme for further feasibility developments, as the authority continued to work with Welsh Government to work up plans for other communities across the county to benefit from this investment in schools and delivering a 21st Century education experience for our 21st Century children and future generations.

It was noted that such feasibility works had been ongoing in the 2022/23 financial year on several schools and therefore those projects were not listed as part of the new programme. The fruits of that work would be seen in the future as the projects secured grant funding from government and were supported in coming years. It was also noted that the primary schools in Ammanford, which were part of the programme, were not listed because they were part of Mutual Investment Model (MIM) bids and would therefore be delivered in conjunction with partners in the private sector funded through revenue in due course.

The Cabinet Member advised that in addition to the flagship projects outlined, the authority would seek to continue supporting its our ongoing rolling programmes of investments in infrastructure and the authority's property portfolio in year five of the programme i.e:

£2.5m for Disability Facilities Grants.
£250k to improve Road Safety.
£250k for highways drainage
£400k for Bridge Strengthening
£600k for ongoing Highway Refurbishment
£400k for Public Lighting
£500k for Education General Works including adaptations to comply with the Equalities Act
£2m for the Strategic Regeneration Project Fund.
£3m for Capital Maintenance for investment in our property estate.

Collectively, over the next five years investment in these rolling programmes would amount to over £48m.

It was noted that 2026/27 would also see the proposed continuation of the £66k annual allocation to Rights of Ways and Byways, in recognition of the Council's obligations in that area and the wider community health and environmental benefits provided by these valuable resources.

The Cabinet Member advised that further investments would also be made across the programme as follows:

In Education – additional funds would be made available to complete the bus bays at Ysgol Dyffryn Taf. Approval would be sought for the inclusion of further bus bays at other schools, namely: Glanymor, Amman Valley and for traffic management improvements at Bro Myrddin. A package of £1.7m new monies. Given the urgency of these projects they would all be included in the first year of the new programme. Additionally, given the urgent need for the provision of an ASD unit for secondary age pupils in the east of the county, a proposal for such a unit in the Llanelli/Burry Port area was also included in the first year - 2023/24, at a value of £2m.

In Communities - in addition to the continued funding for Disability Facilities Grants, already mentioned, within the leisure portfolio a 4G pitch would be provided at the Amman Valley Leisure Centre. Work would also commence on the redevelopment of Oriel Myrddin complimenting other cultural projects completed in recent years such as the new Carmarthenshire Archive – Y Stordy, and redevelopments of the County Museum at Abergwili and Parc Howard.

In Environment - £75k would be provided in 2023/24 to match fund flood management and £1m for flood mitigation works. £4.7m would be provided for the replacement of refuse and recycling vehicles, included as part of the commitment to the rollout of kerbside sorting and recycling collections. As the authority looked to transition to a low carbon economy its highways would still continue to play an important role, therefore, in recognition of their importance to the local economy, and to mitigate the lack of Welsh Government support specifically for investment for highways, a sum of £1m of new money was included in the programme funded from borrowing for highway improvements. That was in addition to the £600k ongoing annual rolling programme and complimented the significant investments in highway improvements in recent years.

With regard to Decarbonisation, the Council had the previous year introduced £500k for the decarbonisation of its built estate and would continue that investment with a further £500K in 2023/24. That came on the top of grants made available to local businesses to introduce renewable energy measures awarded in recent years and demonstrated Carmarthenshire's commitment to the climate change and decarbonisation agenda.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) was crucial to future ways of working; therefore, the programme included £2.4m in this purpose. It includes annual funding of £200k to support digital transformational projects across council services. The County would also see the benefit of the Swansea Bay City Region Digital Project in the coming years.

Overall, the proposed capital programme committed the Council to significant investment over the five years by optimising funding opportunities and maximising the funding from potential external sources. A combination of existing and new schemes in line with the corporate vision would develop the local economy, create jobs, and enhance the quality of life for our citizens and visitors to the county, while safeguarding resources for future generations.

It was noted that County Council funding available for the programme was currently estimated at £168m and included borrowing, both supported and unsupported, reserves and direct revenue funding, Capital Receipts from the sale of surplus assets and Capital grants and contributions of £100m would come from external grant funding bodies. As part of this year's settlement, Welsh Government had provided indicative general capital funding figures up to 2024/25, as reflected in the programme. Funding for years three, four and five of the programme were based on an assumed level of support equivalent to that received in 2024/25 going forward. It was noted that the WG funding for 2023/24 was 55K less than previously expected. The overall level of assumed funding in the later years of the programme was in excess of the current commitments. That uncommitted funding would allow the authority the flexibility to meet future pressures associated with rising costs and other challenges.

As noted with the Revenue Budget Strategy, the final settlement had been received on the 28th February and officers had assessed the main funding sources for the capital programme and confirmed they had not changed from the provisional settlement. However further work would be required to assess direct capital grants and any amendments as a consequence of those and, if required would be addressed by the final recommendation in the report.

The Cabinet Member advised that comprehensive details of the proposed programme were set out in Appendix A to the report and officers would continue to monitor individual schemes and funding availability. Whilst both would need to be closely managed to ensure the schemes were delivered in full, he confirmed the programme was fully funded for the five years.

It was noted that Appendix C, as required by the prudential code of capital finance, included the Council's Capital Strategy Document and set out the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions were made and gave due consideration to both risk and reward and the impact on achievement of priority outcomes.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Capital Programme sought to maximise opportunities was comprehensive and ambitious, with the focus on economic stimulation and the provision of high-quality facilities for our residents.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Cabinet be adopted:

- “5.2.1 The Five-Year Capital Programme and funding as detailed in Appendix A to the report with 2023/24 being a hard budget and 2024/25 to 2027/28 soft/indicative budgets be approved;**
- 5.2.2 The programme be reviewed, as usual, if anticipated external or County Council funding did not materialise;**
- 5.2.3 The Capital Strategy, as detailed in Appendix C be approved;**
- 5.2.4 The Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources**

be delegated authority to make any adjustments necessary as a consequence of the final settlement from the Welsh Government due on the 1st March 2022”.

5.3. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2023-24

Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 20th February, 2023 (minute 7 refers) had considered the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2023/24.

The report had been produced in accordance with the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2017, whereby the Council had previously agreed to maintain a Treasury Management Policy detailing the policies and objectives of the Authority’s treasury management activities. It was noted that it was also a requirement that the Council approved a Treasury Management Strategy annually before the start of the financial year to which it related. In addition, under the Local Government Act 2003, the Council was required to approve the Treasury Management Indicators for the coming year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Cabinet be adopted:

- 5.3.1 The Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2023-24 and the recommendations contained therein be approved;**
- 5.3.2 The Treasury Management Indicators, Prudential Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, the Investment Strategy and recommendations therein be approved.**

5.4. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE STRATEGY 2022-27

Council was informed that Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 13th February 2023 (Minute 6 refers) had considered the Council’s Corporate Strategy 2022-2027, that included the Council’s well-being objectives and setting out the direction of travel and priorities for the organisation over the period of the current administration, whilst also providing the delivery framework on the Cabinet’s vision and commitments during the period. The new strategy would focus on a smaller number of population-based objectives whilst identifying the thematic priorities, service priorities and core business enablers that the Council would aim to progress during that period.

RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Cabinet be accepted:

“that the Council’s Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 be approved”.

6. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE:-

6.1. 30TH JANUARY 2023

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 30th January, 2023 be received.

6.2. 13TH FEBRUARY 2023

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th February, 2023 be received.

7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICES OF MOTION:-

7.1. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLORS ROB JAMES, DERYK CUNDY, ANDREW DAVIES AND ARWEL DAVIES

[NOTE:

Councillors M. Charles, C.A Davies and H Jones having earlier declared an interest in this item, and been granted dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak on the item remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion but left the meeting during the vote]

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Rob James, Deryk Cundy, Andrew Davies and Arwel Davies:-

“That Carmarthenshire County Council supports residents' and local businesses' concerns regarding the proposal to erect pylons to link Mithil Energy Park to the National Grid in Carmarthenshire; believes that Bute Energy should work with landowners to place the cables underground; and that we, as an Authority, writes formally to the energy firm to support the concerns raised.”

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposers and seconder of the Motion were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Motion.

A number of statements were made in support of the Motion.

RESOLVED that the Motion be supported.

7.2. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLORS GARETH THOMAS, ANN DAVIES, ROB JAMES AND CRISH DAVIES

[NOTE:

Councillors M. Charles, C.A Davies, A. Davies, B. Davies, T.A.J. Davies, H.A.L. Davies, L.D. Evans, W.T. Evans, J.K. Howell, H. Jones, J. Lewis and G.B. Thomas having earlier declared an interest in this item, and been granted

dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak and vote on the item, remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote

Councillor S.M. Allen having earlier declared an interest in this item left the Council Chamber and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon]

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gareth Thomas, Ann Davies, Rob James and Crish Davies:-

“An effective eradication strategy for Bovine TB

This council requests that Welsh Government uses the opportunity presented by the refreshed Bovine TB eradication strategy to establish its effectiveness in respect of animal welfare (both wildlife and livestock), public health and cost.

Persistently high infection levels, its impact on both animal welfare and public health combined with an ever increasing cost to the public purse suggest that existing measures are not fit for purpose.

We ask Welsh Government to note and take action on the following points :-

- Bovine TB is a communicable disease that should be addressed holistically as both a wildlife and farmed animal welfare issue, using a comprehensive suite of measures, guided by the best scientific advice available.
- The requirement to frequently test cattle raises stress to livestock and presents a high risk of injury and even fatalities for those involved in conducting tests for Bovine TB.
- The continuous failure to address Bovine TB triggers significant levels of mental health issues among farming families and persons in associated roles.
- Disease outbreaks on holdings need to be dealt with sensitively with effective and simplified communication.
- The eradication programme board should have a balanced representation including all impacted stakeholders.”

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposers and seconder of the Motion were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Motion.

A number of statements were made in support of the Motion.

RESOLVED that the Motion be supported.

8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED).

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no questions by Members had been received.

10. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under 10.1 – 10.8 were available for information on the Council website.

CHAIR

DATE