



NON DOMESTIC RATEPAYERS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY 15TH JANUARY 2018 AT 5PM

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Pritchard – Chair
Councillor D. Price – Vice Chair

Councillor Mrs B. Jones - Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Governance

Together with:

S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), J. Carpenter (Council Tax and NNDR Manager) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence had been received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1992 - SECTION 65 - CONSULTATION WITH NON DOMESTIC RATEPAYERS

The meeting had been convened in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government Act 1992 to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the Council's draft revenue budget proposals for 2018/19.

A notice outlining the provisions of the Act and inviting non-domestic ratepayers to participate in the consultation process had been placed in the local press. Letters had also been sent to the local Chambers of Trade, the South East Branch Federation of Small Businesses, Caerphilly Business Forum, Caerphilly Independent Retailers Association and Blackwood Retail Partnership.

The Chair welcomed representatives from the Federation of Small Business to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

Mr S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance) gave a brief presentation which outlined the background to Council funding and core expenditure and detailed the proposed budget for 2018/19. Whole Authority cost pressures were explained and the categorisation of savings in terms of nil, low or medium impact on the public were noted. The Officer confirmed that in order to deliver a balanced budget a Council Tax increase of 4.52% would need to be implemented. Mr Harris advised that the final package of savings would be presented to Cabinet on the 14th February 2018 and Special Council on the 22nd February 2018.

The Chair thanked Mr Harris for his report and welcomed the comments as part of the consultation process.

Mr M Boughs and Mr R. Basini representing the Federation of Small Business (FSB) were in attendance and provided comments on the budget as they related to their Members. Mr Boughs provided information on the role of the FSB its organisation structure and the support it provided to small businesses. He expressed his support for the methodical proposals detailed within the report.

The need to protect front line services was debated and clarification sought on the use of the Council's reserves. Mr Harris confirmed that Reserves would not be a practical use for savings as they could be used only once and once gone the Council would have no available contingency funds. He also explained that its use in this way would be criticised by external auditors.

Mr J. Carpenter (Council Tax and NNDR Manager) provided information on transitional rate relief. In terms of businesses holding more than one premise, relief would be awarded against the two with the highest rate valuable but others would not receive any rate relief. Additional funding from Welsh Government relating to a High Street rent relief scheme was noted however the Caerphilly share of this funding was still to be established. Reference was also made to £1.3m of additional targeted relief to be shared over the 22 authorities again Officers were still awaiting the detail.

Mr Basini sought clarification as to any further assistance to small businesses and information was provided on the Council's dedicated regeneration service. Reference was made to Brexit and any contingency funding for businesses. Mr Harris confirmed that WG had made no reference to any additional money for Bexit.

The Chair thanked Mr Boughs and Mr Basini for their attendance and confirmed that their comments would form part of the budget consultation process.

The meeting closed at 17:55pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2019, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR