



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN, ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2014 AT 3.15 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor H.A. Andrews - Chairman.

Councillors:

D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), G. Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), Mrs R. Passmore (Education and Lifelong Learning), D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services), K.V. Reynolds (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering), R. Woodyatt (Social Services).

Together with:

S.A. Rosser (Interim Chief Executive), Mrs S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), Mrs N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services).

282. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs C. Forehead, Cabinet Member for HR and Governance/Business Manager.

283. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors H.A. Andrews, D.T. Hardacre, K. James, Mrs R. Passmore, D. V. Poole, K.V. Reynolds, T.J. Williams and R. Woodyatt declared a personal interest in agenda item 3(1) as they have family members employed by the Council. Councillor G. Jones also declared a personal interest in that he is employed by GAVO within another county borough. As their interests were of a personal rather than a prejudicial nature, the Members concerned were able to remain in the meeting and participate in the debate.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

284. BUDGET PROPOSALS 2014/2015 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/2017

The Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer highlighted the key issues within the report, which sought Cabinet approval for the final draft budget proposals. This would allow a further period of consultation to take place prior to a final budget proposal by Cabinet/Council on 26th February 2014.

Following the announcement of the WG final settlement a report was presented to Cabinet on 19th December 2013, which included details of the savings targets to be achieved by 31st March 2017, totalling £28.044m. This is based on WG's indicative further cut of 1.34% in the RSG for 2015/16. The proposals contained within the report deliver (excluding external grant funding) a balanced budget for 2014/15 on the basis that Council Tax is increased by 3.9%.

An extensive consultation process had been undertaken so far, including a Members' seminar, a series of special scrutiny committee meetings, consultation with the Trade Unions and the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. In addition public consultation had taken place through a questionnaire. The consultation process is not yet complete, particularly in respect of the Trade Unions, business ratepayers and political groups. The process would be concluded prior to the release of the final budget proposals for the special Cabinet and Council meetings on 26th February 2014.

The Corporate Director Social Services and the Acting Deputy Chief Executive briefed Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation that had taken place in terms of savings proposals within their respective directorates and Members acknowledged the difficult decisions that would have to be made in order to deliver the required savings.

Following detailed consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the report and its appendices be noted and the following proposals be approved for final consultation: -

1. The Authority operates the 2013/14 WG scheme in 2014/15 in respect of the Council Tax Pensioners Grant.
2. The Living Wage increase to £7.65 per hour be backdated to 1 November 2013.
3. The Revenue Budget proposals for 2014/15 of £332,032m as set out in the report be approved (see Appendix 1).
4. The Council Tax level for the financial year 2014/15 be increased by 3.90% (Council Tax Band D £954.78).
5. The indicative proposals contained in the Medium Term Financial Planning assumptions be approved as the basis for delivering a balanced budget over the forthcoming 3 years (i.e. 2014/15 to 2016/17) (see Appendix 2a and 2b).
6. The Capital Programme for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017 as set out in Appendix 5 be approved.
7. The use of the General Fund balances as detailed in Appendix 6 be approved, including the establishment of provisions for the 2013/14 pension deficit, 2014/15 Senior Officer suspension costs, 2013/14 arrears in respect of the Living Wage and potential delays in delivering 2014/15 savings proposals.
8. The financial strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 as set out in Section 8 of the report be agreed.

The meeting closed at 3.56 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 19th February 2014.

CHAIRMAN