



HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND WELL BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2015 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Miss L. Ackerman - Chair
Councillor Mrs P. Cook - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs A. Blackman, M. Evans, Ms J. Gale, C. Gordon, G.J. Hughes,
Miss L. Jones, J.A. Pritchard, A. Rees, S. Skivens

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Cabinet Member for Social Services
Councillor N. George - Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services),
G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection),
M. Jones (Interim Financial Services Manager), B. Davies (Solicitor), M. Godfrey (Team
Leader - Environmental Health), L. Ross (Senior Environmental Health Officer), C. Peters
(Community Safety Manager), A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer)

Also Present:

Users and Carers: Mr C. Luke, Mrs J.M. Morgan, Mrs M. Veater

Aneurin Bevan Health Board: Mrs B. Bolt, Divisional Director Primary Care and Networks.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.P. Angel, J. Bevan, L. Gardiner and
A. Lewis and Miss L Price (Users and Carers).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2016/17

With regards to this report, declarations of interest were received from Councillors
Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Ms L. Ackerman, J. A. Pritchard. A. Rees and R. Woodyatt, Mr C. Luke
and Mrs M. Veater. Details are minuted with the respective items.

Some were personal (which enabled the Member to stay and take part in the discussion and voting thereon) and others were both personal and prejudicial (which required the Member to leave the meeting when the item was discussed). Details are minuted with the respective items.

Clarification was sought with regard to declarations of interest as it was felt that most Members would have some form of interest in these items whether personally, professionally, through a family member or friend. Members were advised that as the items presented were only being discussed in general terms as part of the consultation process they should declare the interest but would not be precluded from taking an active part in the discussions. It is a matter for the individual Member as to whether they wished to declare an interest and leave the meeting.

Further declarations were received during the course of the meeting and are detailed with the respective items.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following report.

3. UPDATED MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS FOR 2016/17

Councillor R. Woodyatt declared an interest (in that he has a family member who works in social services). He was advised that as he was attending as the respective Cabinet Member, and as it was a personal and not a prejudicial interest, he would not be required to leave the meeting

Mr D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services) presented the report, which provided Members with an overview of the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and draft 2016/17 savings proposals that were presented to Cabinet on the 14th October 2015, and summarised the 2016/17 savings proposals for the Directorate of Social Services and Public Protection Division.

Members were reminded that on 25th February 2015 Council approved the MTFP that showed a potential savings requirement of £14.030m for the 2016/17 financial year and £12.105m for 2017/18. This position assumed a 3.4% cut for both years in the Aggregate External Finance funding (Revenue Support Grant and Redistributed Non-Domestic Rates) received from the Welsh Government. The UK Government has undertaken a Comprehensive Spending Review in recent months and it is anticipated that the financial outlook for Local Government in Wales will inevitably worsen, which will be exacerbated by the likelihood of WG continuing to offer a degree of protection to the NHS.

This Spending Review has resulted in a delay in the announcement of the Welsh Government 2016/17 Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement and this is not expected until 9th December 2015. However, as cuts are likely to be deeper than originally anticipated, the MTFP has now been revised to reflect a reduction in the Aggregate External Finance of 4.3% for 2016/17 and 2017/18, which equates to a further cash reduction of £2.555m for 2016/17 and £2.360m for 2017/18 above the levels originally assumed (i.e. a total savings requirement of £31.050m).

The 2016/17 Draft Savings Proposals Report presented to Cabinet on 14th October 2015 included an updated MTFP based on a number of assumptions and adjustments (some of which have reduced the overall savings requirement). Full details of these were contained

within the report. After all the adjustments have been factored into the updated MTFP the remaining projected savings requirement for the Authority are £14.321m for 2016/17, £11.441m for 2017/18 and £9.423m for 2018/19.

The budget strategy agreed by Council on 25th February 2015 included a number of principles to be followed throughout the process of identifying savings proposals. In following these principles, the work to identify savings proposals has been led by Corporate Management Team in consultation with appropriate Cabinet Members. Heads of Service have been heavily involved throughout the process with support from colleagues in Finance. Service Managers have also been included to ensure that all options that are deliverable for 2016/17 have been considered.

Some of the approved savings for the 2015/16 financial year only had a part-year impact (totalling £1.980m) with the full-year impact now being available to support the savings required for 2016/17. These were summarised in Section 4.2.3 of the report. A high-level summary of the new proposed savings for the 2016/17 financial year, by service area, and totalling £12.432m was also included in the report. The total proposed savings of £12.432m along with the £1.980m full-year impacts is £91,000 higher than the anticipated total savings requirement of £14.321m for the 2016/17 financial year. This provides a small buffer which can be used to reconsider some of the savings proposals at the conclusion of the ongoing consultation process or alternatively the £91,000 can be set aside as savings in advance for the 2017/18 financial year.

The report presented to Cabinet on 14th October 2015 identified savings proposals totalling £8.661m across all service areas that do not have a direct impact on service users or the public. These proposals were categorised into a single line for each service area in the appendices of the report. This is consistent with the approach adopted last year and the proposals consist in the main of vacancy management, structural reviews, budget realignment and minor changes to service provision.

The total 2016/17 savings proposals for Social Services and Public Protection amount to £4.017m, and of this total, £1.633m will have no direct impact on service users or the public. The remaining draft 2016/17 savings proposals totalling £2.384m for Social Services and Public Protection will have an impact on service users and/or the public. These have been categorised as low, medium or high impact and were detailed in the appendices to the report.

During the course of the debate, reference was made to the proposed increase in council tax of 3.9%. It was noted that this was not a matter for the Scrutiny Committee to debate.

Reference was made to the extensive public consultation that is currently underway which commenced on the 19th October 2015 and will end on the 8th January 2016. Members were advised that the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the proposals detailed in the report will form an important part of the consultation process. The options in the report would be highlighted for Members consideration and comment and all views received as part of this process will be included in the report to be presented to Cabinet and subsequently Council. It was pointed out that no decisions have yet been taken.

Members thanked Mr Street for his presentation and then considered the proposals for each of the service areas.

The Chair advised that when considering the proposals, as detailed in the appendices to the report, it was her intention to debate and vote on each individually in order that Officers can be aware of the views of the Members and their support or otherwise on the proposed savings as detailed therein. It was noted that the Users and Carers have no voting rights, and whilst they would take part in the debate they would not be able to vote.

4. CHILDREN'S SERVICES SAVINGS PROPOSALS

G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), presented the report, which advised Members of proposed savings within Children's Services. As agreed, each proposal was considered and the views of Members and their support or otherwise was recorded.

**Ref: SS03 – Blackwood Resource Centre £50k (Part-Year)
(Public Impact - High)**

Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth declared an interest (as she has a relation who works at the centre) and left the meeting when the item was discussed

Members were advised that the proposal is to review all existing care packages to ensure the most efficient use of the Centre. A query was raised in relation to the usage of the facility and the affect this proposal would have on service users and on emergency care. With regards to the latter it was confirmed that the Centre does not provide an emergency service. In noting that the usage does fluctuate throughout the week, Mr Jenkins explained that for the majority of existing service users there is unlikely to be any change to the level of service they receive, though timings of short breaks may need to be changed by prioritising them to weekends and during school holidays.

By a show of hands, and in noting there was 1 Member in favour and 6 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS04 - Reduction in Barnados Family Support and Young Carers Contracts £50k
(Public Impact - High)**

Mrs E.M. Aldworth declared an interest (as she has a relation who works for the Organisation) and left the meeting when the item was discussed.

Members noted that this is a preventative family support service aimed at supporting children and young people to remain living within their families and reducing the risk of breakdown. Details of the project were outlined and concerns were expressed that the proposed reduction in budget will have a significant impact on the county wide service delivery and that referrals will need to be prioritised to those families in greatest need.

By a show of hands, and in noting there was 1 Member in favour and 9 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS07 - Review of Children's Services Locality Structure £77k (Part Year)
(Public Impact: High)**

Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth declared an interest (as she has a relation who works in the service) and left the meeting when the item was discussed.

It was explained that staffing across the Locality Teams has already been reduced by three Team Managers, nine Qualified Social Workers and six Child Care Support Workers and that this additional budget reduction will require further posts to be deleted. At this point in time, rather than determining the number of posts at each grade required to achieve the target, it is proposed that the target will be achieved by deleting posts as they become vacant and re-distributing staffing across the Teams as necessary.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 8 Members in favour and 2 Member against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS05 - Reduction in Commissioned Assessments and Therapies £50k
(Public Impact: Low)**

It was proposed that all requests received for specialist assessments will be screened and agreed by Service Managers and decisions will be based on priority need.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS10 - Reduction in Independent Foster Care Placements £150k
(Public Impact: Low)**

It was explained that whilst Children's Services are committed to the continual recruitment of foster carers there is a proposal to reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements, and as such, the reduction of five IFA placements is suggested.

Concerns were expressed at the effect this proposal may have and it was explained that there will still be early intervention and prevention and, with the use of extensive publication, it is proposed to increase the number of in-house foster carers rather than rely on the independent sector.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour and 1 Member against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

5. ADULT SERVICES SAVINGS PROPOSALS

J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services) presented the report, which advised Members of proposed savings within Adult Services. As agreed, each proposal was considered and the views of Members and their support or otherwise was recorded.

**Ref: SS11 - Decommissioning of Age Concern Hospital Discharge Contract £47k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

It was explained that the decommissioning process would be utilised to withdraw from the joint contract that is managed by Health and links to the implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being Act and the establishment of national eligibility criteria.

Reference was made to the work undertaken by the Hospital Discharge Task and Finish Group and how this will affect its findings (which will be reported late spring 2016). Ms Williams advised that it would not have an impact as this relates to the new Act and the provision of the service. A query was raised in relation to the numbers involved and it was noted that they have been requested but not yet received. It was accepted that there is a need to invest in social care and work in partnership and noted that this proposes that services would not be provided for low level need to facilitate discharge from hospital (e.g. shopping). People with more complex needs are referred to the Hospital Discharge Team or the Community Resource Team (Frailty).

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 2 Members in favour and 6 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS12 - Decommissioning of DEWIS Advocacy Contract £55k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

Members were advised that the decommissioning process will be used to withdraw from this contract. The loss of the service would impact on people but there are other advocacy services available that could be commissioned on an individual basis if required.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS13 - Decommissioning of 2 Luncheon Club Contracts £11k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

It was explained that this proposal seeks to withdraw funding from 2 Luncheon Clubs in St Peters and Nelson. Other clubs have become self-sustaining with attendees meeting the cost of meals and, if required, transport. The decommissioning process would be used which could include looking at alternative community facilities available for people to meet their need and/or assisting Clubs to access alternative funding if required.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS16 - Decommissioning of Stroke Association Contract £17k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

Members were advised that with the awarding of Intermediate Care Fund money to develop an early supported discharge scheme for people who have suffered neurological damage (including strokes), significant funding has been agreed to develop multi-agency Teams to provide advice, information, support and specialist intervention to individuals and their carers. As such, the proposal to decommission the contract should have little impact on new service users.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 8 Members in favour and 2 Members against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS18 - 20% Reduction in Crossroads Advocacy Contract £13k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

Changes in legislation have influenced the practice in Adult Services to the extent that generic contracts based on client groups for the provision of advocacy services are no longer appropriate. Where advocacy is required, specialist support will be provided or commissioned for people on an individual basis.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 8 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS19 - Domiciliary Care (Domestic Support) £153k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

This proposes to cease to provide a service unless there were exceptional circumstances. Following concerns expressed it was explained there are currently approximately 80 people in receipt of domestic support only as part of a care package (this is primarily provided by the independent sector and to a lesser degree by the in-house Home Assistance and Reablement Team). It is proposed that all recipients would be reviewed and assisted to find alternative ways of sourcing domestic support e.g. family/friends/private arrangements prior to withdrawal of the service. There are a significant number of agencies already available to undertake this work.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 5 Members in favour and 4 Members against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS20 - Domiciliary Care (Laundry Services) £138k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

This proposal builds on last year's agreed removal of a shopping service unless there are exceptional circumstances. It was confirmed that there are currently approximately 40 people

in receipt of laundry support only as part of a care package. This is primarily provided by the independent sector and to a lesser degree by the in-house Home Assistance and Reablement Team. All recipients would be reviewed and assisted to find alternative ways of sourcing laundry support e.g. family/friends/private arrangements. There are also a significant number of agencies/options available in the community who already provide this service.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour and 1 Member against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS21 - Domiciliary Care (Sitting Services) £75k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

This proposal is to cease provision of regular night sitting. The 9 service users/carers currently in receipt of this service would be unaffected at their current level. Following concerns expressed, it was confirmed that this would decrease naturally over time as circumstances change and, where there is an emergency situation, night respite could be provided via short stay bed or Emergency Care at Home.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS32 - Day Care and Day Opportunities Services £250k (Part-Year)
(Public Impact: Medium)**

Ms Williams explained that work is ongoing to look to identify further efficiencies in this area following the successful reconfiguration of day services as part of last year's Medium-Term Financial Plan. It was noted that these concentrate on logistics, staff cover and duties which will have limited impact on service users and carers. In noting that there could be an impact on staff, Members were advised that there would be extensive consultation with staff and Trade Unions as part of the process and they were assured that any proposal would be subject to further detailed work, an options analysis and consultation.

Mr Luke advised of ongoing work with Social Services and stressed the need to maintain the networks between the different sectors in order to safeguard the users.

Concerns were expressed that there were not sufficient details of the proposed reconfiguration in order to make an informed decision. Mr Street advised that this is a discretionary service and at this stage, Members were being asked to support the principle of the proposed reconfiguration. Any proposals will be presented to Members in due course.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour and 1 Member against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS33 - Respite Care for People with Learning Disabilities £76k (Part-Year)
(Public Impact: Medium)**

This proposal will look to decommission 1 of the 2 houses, Montclair and Ty Gwilym, currently providing respite services, further details of which will be presented in due course. Members were advised that this is likely to impact on the level of service that can be provided to individuals and their carers. Staff will work with people where required to look at alternative options and all service users will be reviewed in respect of their needs and carers assessments offered.

A query was raised as to whether this could be outsourced and Ms Williams advised that this has been investigated but there is not the resource available to provide an outsourced service. Reference was made to the suitability of each premises and to the future use of the one that is decommissioned. It was explained that further detailed work will commence to undertake condition surveys of the two properties. The premises subsequently decommissioned would be declared surplus to requirements and may raise a capital receipt.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

Ref: SS36 - Externalisation of Care Provision Within Supported Living Homes £108k (Part-Year) (Public Impact: Medium)

Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth declared an interest (as she has a relative who lives in supported accommodation) and left the meeting when the item was discussed.

This proposal will initially concentrate on rationalising existing provision rather than externalisation to meet the identified savings target. Currently in-house provision is a very small percentage of the supported living market within the borough with 7 homes (there being 96 homes in the borough in total). Individuals have their own tenancy in a home and as such could experience some change. This proposal will be subject to further detailed work and full consultation and review.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

Ref: SS14 - Decommissioning of Care and Repair (Safety at Home) Contract £12k (Public Impact: Low)

Councillor Ms L. Ackerman declared an interest (being on the Board of Care and Repair). As it was personal and not prejudicial she was not required to leave the meeting.

Members were advised that the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act will change the way the Authority works with people with a significant focus on Information, Advice and Assistance to promote independence and enable people to meet their own needs. It was explained that Care and Repair have an excellent Handyperson Scheme which is now cross tenure and that people would be sign-posted to this and other appropriate services. It was explained that minor works of adaptations are available via other routes and in exceptional circumstances the minor works budget could be accessed. The decommissioning process would be used to withdraw from this contract.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

Ref: SS15 - Decommissioning of GAVO Contract £5k (Public Impact: Low)

Councillors Ms L. Ackerman and Mrs J.A. Pritchard, Mr C. Luke and Mrs M. Veater declared an interest (being on the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee). As it was personal and not prejudicial they were not required to leave the meeting.

This proposal represents the Social Services part of the Council's contribution to GAVO. It is anticipated this could be found in efficiencies in GAVO as it represent 10% of the total contribution and is likely to have a very minimal impact on individuals.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

Ref: SS23 - Review Support Levels at Plas Hyfryd and Cefn Glas Extra Care Facilities £18k (Public Impact: Low)

This proposal seeks to review the proportion of service users with high, medium or low needs that are accommodated at these facilities so that the overall level of support can be reduced. Both establishments have vacancies and no waiting lists

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS24 - Review Independent Sector Domiciliary Care Packages £160k
(Public Impact: Low)**

Councillor Mrs P. Cook declared an interest (as her husband receives domiciliary care). As it was personal and not prejudicial she was not required to leave the meeting.

This proposals looks to ensure that care packages are reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of the individuals and that corresponding financial information is matched accordingly. Members were advised that there should be no adverse effect on individuals and the review will ensure accurate budget forecasting and reconciliation.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS26 - Domiciliary Care Client Income £150k
(Public Impact: Low)**

Reference was made to the proposals to realign the budget to reflect the outcomes from the Task and Finish Group, which was established to considered changes to the Social Services non-residential care charging policies which have already been approved by Members. It was requested that information be provided on the domiciliary care charge in other local authority and it was noted that this detail has been collated and was presented to the Task and Finish Group. It was confirmed that there is currently a cap of £60 per week on the amount that can be charged for non-residential care and that charges are subject to a means-tested financial assessment.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

Ref: SS34 - Reduction in Commissioned Respite Care for Older People and People with Physical Disabilities £15k (Public Impact: Low)

This proposal reflects the realigning of budgets across Adult Services to reflect current usage. Staff will continue to work with carers to develop all options of meeting their needs to enable them to continue to provide their caring role. This could include informal networks, independent arrangements and the Shared Lives scheme.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour and 1 Member against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS35 - Equipment and Adaptations £100k
(Public Impact: Low)**

This proposes the implementation of a new funding formula which has already been agreed by the GWICES Management Advisory Board which will achieve the large part of this saving. Work has commenced across the partnership to review the range of equipment provided. The proposal again links to the Social Services and Well-Being Act and reflects the changing market in terms of outlets that people can be sign posted to, enabling them to meet their own needs.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS38 - Charging for Meals on Wheels £44k
(Public Impact: Low)**

Members were advised of the proposed increase of 50p in the charge of a meal which will increase the charge from the current level of £3.10 to £3.60. There has been a reduction in the number of meals provided over the years and reference was made to the availability of frozen meals from other providers, supermarkets and promotional schemes locally. With increased choice people can choose to make alternative arrangements to meet their needs.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour and 1 Member against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: SS42 - Office Accommodation £50k
(Public Impact: Low)**

This proposal sought to rationalise the office bases used by Social Services in response to reductions in the workforce resulting from other MTFP proposals. Further work will be required to determine how this saving will be achieved once the full extent of the downsizing of the workforce is known.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

6. PUBLIC PROTECTION SAVINGS PROPOSALS

A number of Members queried as to whether they would be required to declare an interest as they have family members who attend primary/secondary schools or are school governors. Members were reminded that as the items presented were only being discussed in general terms as part of the consultation process they should declare the interest but would not be precluded from taking an active part in the discussion. It is a matter for the individual Member as to whether they wished to declare an interest and leave the meeting.

At this stage, Councillors C. Gordon, Ms L. Jones and J.A. Pritchard and S. Skivens declared an interest. Details are minuted with the respective items.

R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection) presented the report, which advised Members of proposed savings within Public Protection. As agreed, each proposal was considered and the views of Members and their support or otherwise was recorded.

**Ref: PP12 - Reduce Operational Breakfast Clubs Staff Cover by 1 Hour per Day £60k
(Public Impact: High)**

Councillors Ms L. Ackerman, C. Gordon, A. Rees, S. Skivens and J.A. Pritchard declared an interest (as having family members attending/due to attend primary schools or in the case of the latter as a school governor). As they were personal and not prejudicial they were not required to leave the meeting.

Members expressed concerns at the proposal to reduce the staffing hours by 1 hour per day in each of the 68 breakfast clubs in primary schools. It was explained that the operating times of the breakfast clubs would be unchanged, but the level of supervision of pupils would reduce, but remain within WG guidelines for the supervision of children. Mr Hartshorn advised that there would be extensive consultation on this proposal should it be supported.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 2 Members in favour and 8 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP27 - Reduction in Community Safety Warden Service £40k
(Public Impact: High)**

Detail of proposals to withdraw the service on a Sunday or to cut the service to the late shift only were outlined and it was noted that this would involve a reduction in hours of existing staff and/or a reduction in posts (9 FTEs to 7.6 FTEs). Members expressed concerns at both proposals and referred to the effective role carried out by the Community Safety staff in all communities throughout the county borough.

Mr Hartshorn advised that whilst the Authority has a statutory duty to address crime and disorder issues, the supply of Community Safety Wardens was not a statutory requirement. Should the proposals be supported there will be a need to determine how the service can be delivered through discussions with the staff and Trade Unions and by exploring shift patterns and alternative options (possible use of Enforcement Officers). At this stage, the report is seeking the views of Members on the proposal.

Members discussed the proposals in detail and praised the work of the Community Safety Wardens, adding that they provide a valued service within the county borough and that they would not wish to see a reduction in staffing to the service.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP01 - Increase Price of School Meals at Secondary Schools £24k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

Councillor Ms L. Jones declared an interest (as having a family member attending a secondary school). As it was personal and not prejudicial she was not required to leave the meeting.

Members noted the proposal to increase the price of a secondary school meal from September 2016 by 10p, from £2.15 to £2.25 and, as this amounts to an increased cost of 50p per week per child, expressed concerns at the impact on parents/carers. It was noted that this will not impact upon those in receipt of free school meals. It was explained that 'Appetite for Life' relies upon pupils choosing to stay for a meal and increasing high street competition, schools not operating a closed gate policy, and reduced lunch times has had an impact on take-up.

In view of the administrative costs associated with this service, it was queried as to whether there are more efficient ways to collect for school meals (standing order/direct debit). Mr Hartshorn advised that the use of a cashless online system is provided in secondary schools and is being considered in primary schools. Details would be presented to Members in due course.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 4 Members in favour and 6 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP03 - Increase Price of School Meals at Primary Schools £28k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

Councillors L. Ackerman, C. Gordon, A. Rees, S. Skivens and J.A. Pritchard declared an interest (as having family members attending/due to attend primary schools or in the case of the latter as a school governor). As they were personal and not prejudicial they were not required to leave the meeting.

Members noted the proposed to increase the price of a primary school meal from September 2016 by 10p, from £1.90 to £2.00 and again expressed concerns at the impact on parents/carers as this amounts to an increased cost of 50p per week per child.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 4 Members in favour and 6 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP18 - Deletion of Vacant Environmental Health Officer Posts £67k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

It is proposed that a District Environmental Health Officer be appointed to the senior role consequently leaving one post vacant. Members referred to the specialised role of the Environmental Health Officers and noted that there is a potential for impact on all service users including members of the public and other council services e.g. Planning and Licensing. The report advised that the Pollution Team are consultees on both Planning and Licensing applications and it will be difficult to prioritise this above other reactive work.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP23 - Provide CCTV coverage in Towns only £4k
(Public Impact: Medium)**

Members were advised that the Control Room monitors over 155 CCTV cameras on a 24/7 basis covering towns, village centres and Park and Ride facilities. This proposal is the withdrawal of the Public Open Space CCTV system, to leave the main town centres and to decommission 44 cameras at 19 towns/villages throughout the county borough (saving £48k in BT line rental costs).

In view of the deterrent effect that the siting of the CCTV cameras have and in that they would be removed from site (leaving inactive cameras/signage in situ is not an option as they promote a false sense of security). Members expressed concerns that this proposal would be a retrograde step in tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and public safety issues (particularly at Chartist Bridge, Blackwood and at Maesycwmmmer Viaduct). In that the proposals are to decommission 44 cameras in 19 villages/towns, it was suggested that had data been available on their effectiveness, it may have been possible to consider each on a case by case basis.

A query was raised as to whether it is possible to recharge Gwent Police for costs associated with CCTV requests and enquiries. Mr Hartshorn advised that the value of this service to the police force had been recognised and this has been explored. As they are also facing their own budgetary restrictions they are not in a position to provide such assistance.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members against and 1 abstention, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

Ref: PP08 - Introduce Charge to Education Sector for Provision of Sandwich Places £174k (Public Impact: Low)

In that the Catering Service provides a school meals service in 75 primary schools and in doing so currently sets out and clears away places for those pupils eating their own sandwiches (and disposing of any subsequent waste), it was proposed that a charge is introduced for this service amounting to 1 hour of staff time per day at each school.

It was noted that schools may choose to make their own arrangements for sandwich place settings in which case the Catering Service will be able to reduce staffing hours and still realise a saving. A query was raised as to whether any school will accept this proposal and it was noted that there is a meeting with Head Teachers next week to consider this proposal.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 4 Members in favour and 6 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP14 - Deletion of Enforcement Officer Post in Environmental Health £20k
(Public Impact: Low)**

Members noted the number of service requests received each year and the number of fixed penalty notices issued for littering offences and dog fouling offences and expressed concerns at the proposal to reduce one post in the Team. They referred to the potential delays in environmental enforcement (littering and dog fouling control, conducting commercial waste advisory visits, investigating abandoned vehicles and importantly investigating fly-tipping) and to subsequent investigations.

Mr Hartshorn advised that the Team continuously work to promote awareness and deliver environmental education through local campaigns and initiatives. They visit and highlight to schools the importance in encouraging young people to lead and participate in local activities that reduce litter and fly-tipping. With regards to the issue of fixed penalty notices, it was explained that the Officer needs to be in the right place at the right time in order to evidence the offence and issue the notice. However, any incidents of litter/dog fouling should be reported in order that the necessary action can be taken. With regards to the latter, it was noted that a report is currently being prepared to undertake informal public consultation on the making of a Public Spaces Protection Order relating to dog control and will be presented to Members in due course.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members against, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP15 - Introduction of £20 Charge for Domestic Rat Treatments £20k
(Public Impact: Low)**

Concerns were expressed that if the proposal for a £20 charge for domestic rat treatments is introduced it will reduce the number of requests being received. This was evidenced in the report with experience from neighbouring Authorities that has demonstrated that following the introduction of such charges there has subsequently been a significant decline in the number of service requests processed. Members noted that there may be some risk of public health implications due to infestations left untreated (this relates to domestic properties only, sewers being the responsibility of Welsh Water), and that it will impact particularly on low-income households. Members of the public may try to undertake treatments themselves which can lead to the improper placing of rodenticides.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 9 Members against and 1 abstention, this proposal was not supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP21 - Registration Fees £10k
(Public Impact: Low)**

Proposals to increase the fees for 2016/17 in line with the cost to the Authority of providing the function were noted. It was confirmed that the fees relate to life events such as wedding ceremonies with no ongoing costs to service users. A comparison of fees across Wales indicates the proposed fees are comparable with other areas and therefore are unlikely to impact upon the number of ceremonies taking place within the county borough.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 10 Members in favour, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP22 - Deletion of Trading Standards Officer Post £45k
(Public Impact: Low)**

It was proposed that a Trading Standards Officer post be removed from the current structure due to the retirement of a Senior Trading Standards Officer in 2015/16 and back-filling of the

post from within the service. It was noted that the reduction in post will impact on the ability of the service to carry out its statutory duties and respond to serious incidents. Priority will be given to public safety, public protection and the investigation of criminal complaints.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 8 Members in favour and 2 Members against, this proposal was supported by the majority present.

**Ref: PP24 - Reduction in CCTV Staff Cover for Certain Shifts £18k
(Public Impact: Low)**

During discussion on this item, reference was made to the debate under proposal PP23 - Provide CCTV coverage in Towns only.

Consideration was given to the proposal to reduce levels of CCTV staff cover for certain shifts with day shifts to single staffing and a reduction of 50% of evening shifts from 3 to 2 operators. It was noted that the CCTV control room not only monitors the cameras but also alarm (movement) activated CCTV systems at schools, council buildings etc and the out of hours emergency contact service for all calls (other than Social Services calls). Concerns were expressed that reducing to single staffing will result in a risk of increased waiting times for a response to emergency Caerphilly Homes housing calls at busy periods and reduced monitoring of Public Open Space cameras and CCTV security alarms.

By a show of hands, and in noting there was 1 Member for and 9 Members against, this proposal was not supported

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2016, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR