



CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER 2017

SUBJECT: DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2018/19

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Cabinet with details of draft budget proposals for the 2018/19 financial year to allow for a period of consultation prior to a final decision in February 2018.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of draft budget proposals based on the Welsh Government (WG) Provisional 2018/19 Local Government Financial Settlement.
- 2.2 The report also provides details of draft savings proposals for 2018/19 totalling £7.205m.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The budget setting process encompasses all the resources used by the Council to deliver services and meet priorities.
- 3.2 Effective financial planning and the setting of a balanced budget support the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015: -
- A prosperous Wales.
 - A resilient Wales.
 - A healthier Wales.
 - A more equal Wales.
 - A Wales of cohesive communities.
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
 - A globally responsible Wales.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Headline Issues in the Provisional Settlement

- 4.1.1 Published on the 10th October 2017, the key points of the WG Provisional 2018/19 Local Government Financial Settlement are the following: -
- An overall net cash increase of 1.8% in the Aggregate External Finance (Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Redistributed Non-Domestic Rates) on an all-Wales basis. This cash increase includes specific grants totalling circa £92m that have been transferred into the RSG and £6m funding for new responsibilities in relation to the prevention of homelessness.

- After adjusting for the transfer in of the specific grants and new responsibilities there is an overall net decrease in the Aggregate External Finance of 0.5% on an all-Wales basis (comparing on a like-for-like basis with 2017/18). This varies by Authority due to the funding formula and ranges from minus 1% to plus 0.2%.
- For Caerphilly CBC there is a cash increase of £1.973m in the Aggregate External Finance. However, after adjusting for the transfer in of specific grants and new responsibilities this equates to a net cash reduction of £2.965m (1%) compared to the 2017/18 financial year.
- Caerphilly CBC's element of the £92m specific grants transferred into the Settlement and the £6m for new responsibilities totals £4.937m. Details are provided in paragraph 4.1.2.
- Changes to other passported grants in the Provisional Settlement result in a net reduction of £0.473m as detailed in paragraph 4.1.3.
- An all-Wales indicative reduction in Aggregate External Finance of minus 1.5% has been provided by WG for the 2019/20 financial year.
- The capital allocations available to Caerphilly CBC in the RSG and from the General Capital Grant have decreased by £64k from the 2017/18 financial year.

4.1.2 Table 1 provides details of transfers into the WG Financial Settlement and new responsibilities: -

Table 1 – Transfers In and New Responsibilities 2018/19

	£m
Transfers In: -	
Single Revenue Grant (waste element only)	1.818
Welsh Independent Living Grant	1.010
Social Care Workforce Grant	1.140
Carers' Respite Care Grant	0.180
Looked After Children: -	
• Expanding Edge of Care Service	0.342
• Support for Care Leavers	0.111
• Reflect	0.054
New Responsibilities: -	
Prevention of homelessness	0.282
TOTAL	4.937

4.1.3 Table 2 provides details of changes to other passported grants included in the WG Financial Settlement: -

Table 2 – Other Passported Grants 2018/19

	£m
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	(0.272)
Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	(0.201)
TOTAL	(0.473)

4.1.4 As in previous years, the adjustments in Tables 1 and 2 (both the increases and decreases in funding) will be passed directly to those services that they relate to.

4.2 2018/19 Draft Budget Proposals

4.2.1 The proposals contained within this report will deliver a balanced budget for 2018/19 on the basis that Council Tax is increased by 4.52%. Table 3 provides a summary: -

Table 3 – Summary

Paragraph	Description	£m	£m
4.2.3 – 4.2.9	Whole-Authority cost pressures	8.867	
4.2.10 – 4.2.18	Inescapable service pressures	2.310	
4.1.1	Increase in WG funding		1.973
4.3.1	Draft savings proposals 2018/19		7.205
4.3.3	Contingent sum/savings in advance	1.000	
4.4.1 – 4.4.2	Council Tax uplift (4.52%)		2.999
	TOTAL	12.177	12.177

4.2.2 Cabinet should note that the draft budget proposals assume no growth for Schools in 2018/19 i.e. a cash flat position. There is no requirement in the Provisional Settlement to protect Schools and they will therefore be required to manage their own pay and non-pay inflationary increases in 2018/19 along with other emerging cost pressures. This in effect equates to a real terms cut of £1.644m (1.68%). However, this needs to be considered alongside the need to deliver savings of £7.205m for other services across the Council, which equates to 3.24% of current budgets. This does therefore provide some relative protection to schools from the full extent of savings required to deliver a balanced budget.

4.2.3 The whole Authority cost pressures totalling £8.867m are set out in Table 4 below -

Table 4 – Whole Authority Cost Pressures

	£m
Pay – Weighted average increase of 1.2%	1.383
Living Wage	0.148
Employer pension contributions	0.249
Non-pay inflation at 2%	2.623
Transfers in and new responsibilities	4.937
Other passported grants	(0.473)
TOTAL	8.867

4.2.4 **Pay – Weighted average increase of 1.2%** - The pay award for the 2018/19 financial year is still subject to agreement so the draft budget proposals currently assume a pay award at 2017/18 levels. This presents a risk as the pay claim submitted by the Trade Unions significantly exceeds this sum. A further risk in relation to pay is that pay scale differentials may need to be reviewed as a result of annual increases in the National Living Wage which was introduced by the UK Government from April 2016. Work is ongoing in this area and the position is being kept under review.

4.2.5 **Living Wage** – Caerphilly CBC is a Living Wage Foundation employer so a sum is included in the draft budget proposals to allow for annual increases in the Living Wage hourly rate.

4.2.6 **Employer pension contributions** – Following the outcome of the most recent triennial valuation of the Pension Fund, Caerphilly CBC is required to increase its pension contribution by £249k (0.28%) for the 2018/19 financial year.

4.2.7 **Non-pay inflation at 2%** - The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation rate is currently 3% against the Bank of England's target rate of 2%. The draft budget proposals only allow for non-pay inflation at 2% so budget holders will need to manage the impact of any shortfall. This is sustainable for 2018/19 but in the longer-term additional funding may need to be set-aside if inflation continues to exceed the Bank of England target of 2%.

4.2.8 **Transfers in and new responsibilities** – As per the table in paragraph 4.1.2.

4.2.9 **Other passported grants** - As per the table in paragraph 4.1.3.

- 4.2.10 It is incumbent upon Council to set a realistic budget each year. Table 5 provides details of the 2018/19 inescapable service commitments/pressures that have been identified and require consideration in respect of funding: -

Table 5 – Inescapable Service Pressures and Other Service Commitments

	£m
Social Services cost pressures	1.500
City Deal partnership revenue contribution	0.060
City Deal debt charges	0.050
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) review	0.700
TOTAL	2.310

- 4.2.11 **Social Services cost pressures** - Cabinet will recall that the 2016/17 budget included additional funding of £2.5m for Social Services cost pressures and a further £3.5m was also set aside in 2017/18. This has been necessary to fund increases in fees for external care providers due in the main to the introduction of the National Living Wage, and additional costs arising from increasing demand for services in both Adult and Children's Services. It is proposed that a further sum of £1.5m should be allocated in the 2018/19 budget to meet ongoing financial pressures for Social Services.
- 4.2.12 **City Deal partnership revenue contribution** – At its meeting on the 31st January 2017, Council agreed an annual revenue contribution of £120k towards the support structure for the City Deal Regional Cabinet. For 2017/18 the contribution was only expected to be £60k due to underspends being carried forward from 2016/17 so £60k was included in the base budget. From 2018/19 onwards there will need to be provision in the base budget to meet the full £120k annual commitment therefore a further £60k will need to be included in the 2018/19 budget.
- 4.2.13 **City Deal Debt Charges** – The City Deal includes a borrowing requirement of £120m for the ten partner Local Authorities. £50k has been included in the 2018/19 draft budget proposals to meet the current anticipated cost for Caerphilly CBC's share of potential early borrowing that may be undertaken during the year. This is being kept under review and will be updated in the final budget 2018/19 budget proposals report that will be presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2018.
- 4.2.14 **Private Finance Initiative (PFI) review** – A review of the Council's PFI contracts is currently being undertaken. These contracts relate to Fleur de Lys (Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini) and Pengam (Lewis Boys) Secondary Schools, and Sirhowy Enterprise Way (SEW). To assist with this review the services of a company called Local Partnerships have been commissioned. This organisation has a proven track record in relation to supporting public sector bodies through reviews of operational PFI contracts and was recommended by WG.
- 4.2.15 The PFI Schemes are financially managed through two Sinking Funds which profile the anticipated costs and financial contributions over the life of the contracts. At the outset of the contracts the Sinking Funds showed a projected balanced position based on a range of assumptions at that time.
- 4.2.16 Based on updated financial projections completed as part of the ongoing review process the SEW Sinking Fund remains fully funded over the life of the project. However, the latest financial projections for the Schools PFI reveal an anticipated shortfall of circa £22m on the Schools PFI Sinking Fund. The main reasons for this are the following: -
- Financial impact of additional services agreed through the contract benchmarking process i.e. £3.3m.
 - There appears to have been a 'double count' from the outset in relation to the treatment of Free School Meals, with a cost implication of circa £3.5m.
 - Interest on balances is projected to be circa £7.1m less than originally anticipated due to changes in the payment profile and the impact on balances held.

- The remaining balance of £8.1m is due in the main to actual inflationary pressures compared to original assumptions.

4.2.17 To address this anticipated shortfall budgetary growth of circa £700k will need to be built into the Education & Lifelong Learning base budget from 2018/19 to ensure that a balanced position can be achieved for the Schools PFI Sinking Fund. This figure may reduce as part of the ongoing work being undertaken with Local Partnerships as discussions are continuing with the service provider regarding the potential for savings on services such as catering and cleaning.

4.2.18 A separate detailed report on the PFI review will be scheduled for Cabinet prior to final 2018/19 budget proposals being presented to both Cabinet and Council in February 2018.

4.3 2018/19 Draft Savings Proposals

4.3.1 Draft savings proposals have been identified for the 2018/19 financial year totalling £7.205m as summarised in Table 6: -

Table 6 – Draft Savings Proposals 2018/19

Description	2018/19 Saving £m
Savings proposals with no public impact	4.682
Savings proposals with a public impact: -	
• Low impact	1.218
• Medium impact	1.305
TOTAL	7.205

4.3.2 A summary of savings proposals by Directorate/Service Area is provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 provides further details of the savings proposals that are likely to have an impact on the public. As in previous years, those savings proposals that are not expected to have an impact on the public have been consolidated into a single line for each service area. These 'nil impact' savings consist in the main of vacancy management, budget realignment and minor changes to service provision.

4.3.3 The proposed savings of £7.205m along with the proposed Council Tax increase of 4.52% will allow for a contingent sum of £1m to be set aside to meet additional cost pressures that may arise from the final pay award for the 2018/19 financial year and potential changes to pay scale differentials. If this contingent sum is not required in full or in part to meet these potential cost pressures then it is recommended that any balance should be treated as savings in advance to assist with further financial pressures that will need to be managed in future financial years.

4.4 Council Tax Implications 2018/19

4.4.1 The draft budget proposals within this report include a proposed increase of 4.52% in Council Tax for the 2018/19 financial year. This will increase the Caerphilly CBC Band D precept from £1,011.96 to £1,057.70 i.e. an annual increase of £45.74 or weekly increase of £0.88.

4.4.2 The proposed increase of 4.52% for 2018/19 will result in the following totals for the Caerphilly CBC element of the Council Tax (the Police & Crime Commissioner and Town/Community Council precepts would be added to these totals when confirmed at a later date): -

Table 7 – 2018/19 Council Tax (CCBC Element) at 4.52% Increase

Band	Council Tax (CCBC Element) £	Weekly Increase £
A	705.13	0.59
B	822.66	0.68
C	940.18	0.78
D	1,057.70	0.88
E	1,292.75	1.08
F	1,527.79	1.27
G	1,762.83	1.47
H	2,115.40	1.76
I	2,467.97	2.05

4.5 Financial Outlook for Future Years

- 4.5.1 The Medium-Term Financial Plan presented to Council in February 2017 showed a potential savings requirement of £22.161m for the three-year period 2019/20 to 2021/22. This assumed a cash flat position in terms of the WG Financial Settlement for each of the three years. As mentioned in paragraph 4.1.1, WG has provided an all-Wales indicative reduction in Aggregate External Finance of minus 1.5% for the 2019/20 financial year. This would increase Caerphilly CBC's savings requirement by a further £3.984m for 2019/20 alone. If this was replicated in 2020/21 and 2021/22 then further savings of £7.789m would be required. This would result in a total savings requirement of circa £34m for the three-year period 2019/20 to 2021/22.
- 4.5.2 The indicative reduction of 1.5% provided by WG for the 2019/20 financial year is based on a current assumption that a proportion of unallocated UK Government savings totalling circa £3.5bn will flow through to WG. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will present his Autumn Budget Statement on the 22nd November 2017 and this will provide further clarity on any unallocated savings that may impact on WG. Details of the Final 2018/19 Local Government Financial Settlement will be issued on the 20th December 2017 and this will include a revised indicative figure for 2019/20 based on the implications of the Autumn Statement.
- 4.5.3 An updated Medium-Term Financial Plan covering the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 will be presented to both Cabinet and Council in February 2018.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 Effective financial planning is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An equalities impact assessment will be completed for all of the 2018/19 savings proposals that are expected to have an impact on the public. This is to ensure that decisions that affect different individuals and groups are assessed at an appropriate and relevant level and at the correct stage in the process.
- 6.2 Consultation with residents, when done in accordance with the Council's Public Engagement Strategy and the Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance, also ensures that every resident, regardless of circumstances, has the opportunity to have their views heard and considered in the Council's decision-making process.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As detailed throughout the report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Where staff reductions are required as a consequence of savings proposals the Council will firstly try to achieve this through 'natural wastage' and not filling vacancies. However, where this is not possible then every opportunity will be taken to find alternative employment through the Council's redeployment policy. The Council will also utilise other policies as appropriate e.g. voluntary severance.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 Cabinet is asked to agree that the draft budget proposals for 2018/19 should now be subject to a period of consultation prior to final 2018/19 budget proposals being presented to Cabinet on the 14th February 2018 and then Council on the 20th February 2018. The consultation process will run from the 13th November 2017 to the 8th January 2018 and will consist of the following: -

- Online and paper consultation.
- Articles in Newslines.
- Use of Social Media.
- Drop-In Sessions at locations across the County Borough.
- Meetings with the Viewpoint Panel, 50+ Forum, Youth Forum etc.
- Engagement with employees and the Trade Unions.
- Consultation with Town and Community Councils.
- Consultation with the Voluntary Sector.
- Posters at affected establishments.
- Other targeted stakeholder engagement as appropriate.

9.2 As part of the consultation process there will also be a series of Special Scrutiny Committees to focus on the savings proposals. In addition to considering the content of this Cabinet report the Scrutiny Committees will receive further reports providing more detail on the savings proposals that are expected to have an impact on the public. The dates of the Special Scrutiny Committee meetings are as follows: -

- 04/12/17 – Policy & Resources.
- 07/12/17 – Education for Life.
- 11/12/17 – Health, Social Care & Wellbeing.
- 13/12/17 – Regeneration & Environment.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Cabinet is asked to: -

10.1.1 Endorse the draft 2018/19 budget proposals including the proposed savings totalling £7.205m.

10.1.2 Support the proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.52% for the 2018/19 financial year to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved (Council Tax Band D being set at £1,057.70).

10.1.3 Agree that the draft budget proposals should now be subject to consultation prior to final 2018/19 budget proposals being presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2018.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 Council is required annually to approve proposals to set a balanced budget and agree a Council Tax rate.
- 11.2 Council is required to put in place a sound and prudent financial framework to support service delivery.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

Author: Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance
E-mail: harrisr@caerphilly.gov.uk Tel: 01443 863022

Consultees: Corporate Management Team
Andrew Southcombe, Finance Manager, Corporate Finance
Richard Harris, Internal Audit Manager & Acting Monitoring Officer
Cllr Dave Poole, Leader
Cllr Barbara Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Governance

Background Papers:

WG Provisional 2018/19 Local Government Financial Settlement (10th October 2017)
Council (22/02/17) - Budget Proposals 2017/18 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2017/2022

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Summary of 2018/19 Savings Proposals
Appendix 2 - 2018/19 Savings Proposals