



SPECIAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON THURSDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Simmonds - Mayor
Councillor C. Andrews - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

M. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, J. Bevan, P.J. Bevan, C. Bezzina, L.J. Binding, A. Collis, S. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, D.T. Davies, M. Davies, N. Dix, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, A. Gair, Ms J. Gale, N. George, C. Gordon, R.W. Gough, D.T. Hardacre, L. Harding, D. Harse, D. Havard, A.G. Higgs, A. Hussey, M.P. James, V. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, S. Kent, C.P. Mann, P. Marsden, S. Morgan, Mrs G.D. Oliver, B. Owen, Mrs T. Parry, Mrs L. Phipps, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, J. Pritchard, J. Ridgewell, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, J. Scriven, G. Simmonds, S. Skivens, Mrs E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, L G. Whittle, T. Williams, W. Williams, B. Zaplatynski

Together with:-

C. Harray (Interim Chief Executive), M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities), S. Harris (Interim Head of Business Improvement Services & Acting S151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), A. Southcombe (Finance Manager - Corporate Finance), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), D. Lucas (Team Leader, Strategic Planning), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. WEB-CASTING FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Interim Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be made publicly available in live and archive form via the Council's website. She advised that decisions would be made via the electronic voting system.

2. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Leader referred to a question submitted by Councillor K. Etheridge to Council on 21st January 2020 under Rule of Procedure 10(2) and the response given at that meeting. The Leader apologised to Councillor Etheridge and the Independent Group for a comment made in the course of her response, which had not been received in the way intended, and hoped that a line could now be drawn under the matter.

Councillor Etheridge thanked the Leader for her apology which he accepted on behalf of himself and the Independent Group, and stated that he would now like to move on and work together for the good of the people in the county borough.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.P. Angel, W. David, K. Dawson, C. Elsbury, Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, Mrs B.A. Jones, G. Kirby, Mrs A. Leonard, Ms P. Leonard, B. Miles, Mrs D. Price and A. Whitcombe.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations received at the commencement of the meeting. During the course of the debate on Agenda Item 8 (Budget Proposals for 2020/21 and Medium-Term Financial Outlook), declarations of interest were received from Councillors S. Skivens, C.P. Mann, D.T. Davies, D. Havard, C. Gordon, A.G. Higgs and P.J. Bevan. Details are minuted with the respective item.

5. ANNOUNCEMENT - RECENT FLOODING EVENTS

The Interim Chief Executive referred to the unprecedented scale of disruption caused by the two recent storms across the country and the exemplary work carried out by Council staff around the clock in atrocious conditions to support the victims of flooding.

Members were reminded of the extensive damage caused by the adverse weather conditions and the scale of the clean-up operation by Council staff. The Interim Chief Executive cited the work of Council staff as an excellent example of Team Caerphilly in action and stated how proud she was to lead such a dedicated team of staff. With the approval of Council, the relevant teams would be invited to the next full meeting of Council on 3rd March 2020 in order for their efforts to be formally recognised.

The Leader of Council echoed the thanks of the Interim Chief Executive and announced that a special package of support would be put in place by the Council to help those residents and businesses affected by the flooding. £250,000 has been set aside to support those properties directly affected by Storm Dennis, comprising a £500 payment for eligible homes and £1000 for eligible businesses. The Council is also offering a free collection service to assist in the disposal of items damaged by the flood water, and is signposting residents to other existing schemes of support available, such as Welsh Government's Discretionary Assistance Fund. The Leader acknowledged that there may be some affected properties that the Council is unaware of, and urged those particular individuals to contact the Council as soon as possible.

Members welcomed the package of assistance being put in place by the Council and placed on record their thanks to all Officers involved in supporting the victims of flooding, together with the many volunteers helping with the clear-up operation in local communities affected by the storms.

In response to Members' questions on the support being made available, it was confirmed that the Council would contact all known cases of flooding in order to initiate the process for financial assistance, and that any local sports or rugby clubs affected by the flooding should also contact the Council to see what assistance can be offered. A Member also asked if street lighting settings could be adjusted during severe weather events to improve night-time visibility in dangerous situations. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that this suggestion

could be examined, but emphasised the logistical challenges around actioning this type of request, particularly when taking into account the red weather warning received at short notice and limited timeframe when mobilising operations for Storm Dennis.

Another Member questioned if the recent events could be classed as unprecedented, and asked if the recommendations in the 2008 Pitt Review of flood risk management were being met by the Council in their operational response. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that she would re-examine the recommendations following the meeting but gave assurances that the Council had responded to the flooding incidents in full accordance with both statutory requirements and the Council's emergency planning requirements and reminded Members that it was the scale and impact of the storms that were of an unprecedented nature.

A Member also asked for Council to recognise the work of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for their professionalism in dealing with an unprecedented number of calls during the recent storms.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) BILL 2019

Consideration was given to the report, which sought Council approval of the proposed Caerphilly County Borough Council response to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019.

Council were advised that the Bill is currently at Stage 1 in its progress through Welsh Government and is the culmination of several years of consultation on the structure and function of local government in Wales. Many of the provisions in the Bill have previously been consulted upon and Council has provided its views through previous responses to Welsh Government. This Bill consolidates a number of previous proposals and introduces some new provisions.

The proposed response appended to the report reflects previous views expressed by this Council and includes a view on the new provisions. Most notably these concern the proposal to create mandatory Corporate Joint Committees for certain functions, and changes to the performance management regime for local government. Group Leaders have been consulted upon the proposed response and their comments incorporated in the report. Where the views of Group Leaders diverge from the proposed response, notably in the case of the choice of voting system, this was explained in the body of the report.

During the course of the debate, discussion took place on the provision in the Bill to allow Council employees to stand for election, and mixed opinions were expressed over the current position whereby an employee has to resign from their job before they announce their candidacy. It was noted that although differing Group views were set out in the report, the Council's proposed response was to disagree with this aspect of the Bill in order to avoid any compromise to both the Authority and the employee.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there were 3 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report, the Council's response to

the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be endorsed and provided to the Welsh Government Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

7. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UP TO 2021 – REVIEW REPORT

Consideration was given to the report, which sought Council approval to commence consultation on the Draft Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 Review Report for 3 weeks starting Monday 24th February 2020 and concluding Monday 16th March 2020.

Members were reminded that Council at its meeting on 23rd October 2019 resolved to commence a full revision of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (LDP). The Council is required to prepare a Review Report that must subsequently be submitted to Welsh Government, and is a factual document that sets out the reasons for reviewing the LDP and what issues will need to be considered as part of the review process. It is recommended that the Council should consult with specific and general consultation bodies to maximise the robustness of the Review Report and its conclusions, and it was therefore proposed to publish the Draft Review Report for a 3-week period of consultation from 24th February 2020 to 16th March 2020.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members expressed concerns regarding the potential for flooding across certain sites identified for development in the LDP, and Officers explained that as part of the LDP review, the Council will be required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment in respect of the proposals in the LDP. Moving forward there will be a stronger emphasis in WG policy on flooding matters, also taking into account surface water drainage. WG have also recently consulted on amendments to the Technical Advice Note which provides detailed advice on how to consider flooding issues in developments, and the Council is currently awaiting news of the recommended changes.

Reference was made to the lack of housing delivery across the county borough, together with affordable housing targets not being met by developers, and it was noted that the Annual Monitoring Report presented to Council recognises both of these issues. Officers explained that these problems are partly due to affordable housing in terms of planned delivery being tied into market housing which is negotiated as part of that settlement and has not come forward as anticipated. These difficulties are also outlined in the Review Report and will be addressed as part of the LDP review. It was explained that when setting affordable housing targets, the Council has regard for the viability of development and the evidence of need as defined by the Local Housing Market Assessment. Moving forward, the Council will carry out work on the viability element and will become more stringent on the deliverability of each site, which may lead to targets being lower than those in the current LDP.

Clarification was sought on the criteria for affordable homes and if the Council has this in place to offer affordability to its residents. Officers outlined the definition of affordable homes and explained that in planning terms, this generally means social housing (those homes developed by the Council or by a registered social landlord) and that affordable homes on the private market do not fall under this definition and is therefore a separate matter. However, other avenues exist (such as low-cost home ownership schemes) that seek to address the issue of affordability across the private market.

Members expressed the need for more development to the north of the county borough in order to increase employment levels and create more affordable homes, and asked how this could be achieved. Officers explained that not all sites across the Heads of the Valley

identified in the LDP have come forward for development, which is in the main due to house values and viability. Moving forward the Council will have due regard to viability and deliverability and will take advantage of the new funding avenues being made available, which may lead to sites in less viable areas becoming available for development.

Council were also reminded that strategies for improving employment and business development opportunities are set out in the draft Heads of The Valley Masterplan currently out for consultation. The Council is working closely with local businesses through the work being carried on the Masterplan, together with WG and the Valleys Task Force to develop targeted intervention along the A465 corridor. Council were asked to note that although the LDP recognises the need to identify land for employment, it is limited in this regard as it only identifies the land for use and not the subsequent development of that land.

In response to a query on the value and benefits of the Masterplans, it was explained that the existing Masterplans are already enabling major funding opportunities, and that these documents, which are of significant strategic importance, underline the Council's commitment to the regeneration of the area and enhancing employment and business opportunities across the county borough.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there was 1 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report:-

- (i) the Draft Review Report as set out at Appendix 1 be agreed for consultation;
- (ii) the Review Report be published for a 3-week consultation period commencing 24th February 2020 and concluding on 16th March 2020.

8. CAERPHILLY HOMES - #BUILDING TOGETHER

Consideration was given to the report, which outlined the Council's vision to build new homes and increase housing supply in the county borough following the completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) in 2020.

It was noted that the report had been presented to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 26th November 2019, Cabinet on 15th January 2020 and the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 16th January 2020. The Scrutiny Committee unanimously supported the report and the majority of the report recommendations were subsequently approved by Cabinet under executive powers. The report therefore sought Council's approval on two recommendations in relation to the use of previous borrowing and a proposal for further borrowing totalling £14m.

Members were advised that the WHQS programme is currently on track to be completed by June 2020 and current projections suggests that Caerphilly will borrow a total of £45m, which leaves borrowing headroom of £16m from the £61m originally agreed by Council. Moving forward, the Council's objective is to deliver on ambitious long-term investment plans to build and acquire a new generation of homes that meet a growing local need for new social and affordable housing, together with delivering services for residents and delivering on Welsh Government's decarbonisation agenda.

During the course of the ensuing debate a Member asked how much had been spent on the WHQS programme to date and queried if the right procurement strategy had been put in place to deliver the programme, given the amount of overspend over the duration of the

project when compared to the original cost estimate. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing confirmed that total projected spend is now in the region of £260m, which is an increase on the estimate of £200m at the commencement of the programme in 2011. It was emphasised however that the estimate was based on the position at that time, and Members were reminded of the scale of the WHQS programme and of the many complex challenges that the Council has encountered during the delivery of the scheme, including changes to the organisations and private companies contracted to deliver the scheme of works. However, it was explained that this overspend has resulted in the WHQS scheme coming to fruition and has seen the delivery of an improved quality of housing across the county borough.

A Member expressed concern regarding the level of unused borrowing and asked if all WHQS works across properties had been fully carried out. Officers gave assurances that all properties identified as requiring WHQS works have been brought up to standard wherever possible, and that any unfinished properties are as a result of the Council being unable to gain access to carry out the works. All Members were urged to contact the Council if they are aware of any properties where the works have not been carried out.

A Member asked how much funding remains in WHQS budget and if it would be more conducive to utilise reserves for any further funding required, rather than undertake further borrowing. Officers confirmed that there is currently an underspend in the region of £16m, and that the further £14m to be borrowed will create a budget of £30m which will allow the Council to meet the aims and objectives of its *#BuildingTogether* strategy. With regards to the use of reserves, it was explained that the WHQS is linked to the HRA which is a ring-fenced account and therefore general fund balances cannot be used to fund any reserves in the HRA.

Queries were received regarding an update on works at the former Cwm Ifor Primary School site, and the value of the Council's housing stock. It was confirmed that arrangements would be made to provide this information to Members following the meeting. Members were also asked to note that whilst there is a financial value attached to housing stock, these properties also provide a number of other benefits, including good quality of living for its residents and the opportunities to use housing for regeneration

A Member suggested that a cross-party group be set up to look at the outturn of the WHQS programme, including the problems encountered during the delivery of the process. The Interim Chief Executive emphasised that lessons had been learned throughout the length of the programme and explained that Officers are already looking to carry out evaluation works through engagement with Members and the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. Members were asked to bear with Officers whilst this task is undertaken so that proposals can be prepared in this regard.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the Officer's covering report be approved. By way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there were 2 against with 3 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report:-

- (i) any unused borrowing from the £61m originally earmarked for WHQS be transferred to support the delivery of the new build programme;
- (ii) further borrowing of £14m be agreed to kick start the new build programme and other proposals contained in the report.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL STRATEGY, CAPITAL FINANCE PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY FOR 2020/2021

Consideration was given to the report, which detailed the Council's Annual Strategy for Treasury Management, Capital Finance Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Policy Provision for 2020/2021. It was noted that the report had been presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th January 2020, where the recommendations were supported by the majority of the Committee, and their views set out in the Officer's covering report.

Council were asked to approve the recommendations set out in the report, subject to an amendment set out at Section 1.6 of the covering report which detailed an amendment required to Appendix 6 in respect of the net revenue stream within the Total General Fund. This is due to the proposed increase in the Council Tax for 2020/21 now being reduced to 4.70%.

Members expressed their support for the proposals and particularly welcomed the proposed £20m investment in long-term Strategic Pool Funds as a positive step for the Council. Reference was made to the position in respect of the PFI projects and it was explained that the Council is continuing to work with Local Partnerships and is currently looking at all options in respect of the arrangements for the PFI contracts for the two schools. It is currently anticipated that a draft business case will be prepared for Members' consideration by April 2020.

Following due debate, it was moved and seconded that subject to the amendment to Appendix 6 as set out in Section 1.6 of the Officer's covering report, the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of the electronic voting system this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Annual Strategy for Treasury Management 2020/21 be approved;
- (ii) the strategy be reviewed quarterly within the Treasury Management monitoring reports presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, and any changes recommended be referred to Cabinet, in the first instance, and to Council for a decision. The Authority will also prepare a half-yearly report on Treasury Management activities;
- (iii) the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management for the financial years 2020/21 to 2022/23 as outlined in Appendix 5 of the report be approved;
- (iv) the Prudential Indicators for Capital Financing for the financial years 2020/21 to 2022/23 as outlined in the amended Appendix 6 set out in the Officer's covering report, together with Appendix 7 of the report, based on the indicative capital programme, be approved;
- (v) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 8 of the report be adopted;
- (vi) The continuation of the 2019/20 investment strategy and the lending to financial institutions and Corporates in accordance with the minimum credit rating criteria disclosed within the report be approved;
- (vii) the Authority borrows £32.3m for the General Fund to support the 2020/21 capital programme and £52.0m for the HRA WHQS and Affordable Homes programme;

- (viii) the Authority continues to adopt the investment grade scale as a minimum credit rating criteria as a means to assess the credit worthiness of suitable counterparties when placing investments;
- (ix) the Authority adopts the monetary and investment duration limits as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;
- (x) the Authority invests a minimum of £20m into long-term Strategic Pool Funds as set out in Appendix 9 of the report, with the aim of generating additional investment income of £718k.

10. CAPITAL STRATEGY REPORT 2020/2021

Consideration was given to the report, which outlined the Capital Strategy Report for 2020/21 in accordance with the Prudential Code that was introduced by the Local Government Act 2003 and sought Council approval on its contents. It was noted that the report had been submitted to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee as an information item on 9th January 2020, with the Committee invited to make any comments on the report directly to the Author prior to its presentation to Council. No comments were subsequently received on the contents of the report.

Council were asked to note that paragraph 5.2.5 of the report set out details of the Council's core Capital Programme for the three-year period 2020/21 to 2022/23. In addition to this, at its meeting on 29th January 2020, Cabinet approved a proposal to earmark an additional £24.543m of reserves to boost the Capital Programme by investing in the Council's 'place shaping' agenda.

Furthermore, Members were asked to note that the 2020/21 Budget Proposals Report being considered separately by Council later in the meeting included recommendations to set aside further sums totalling £4.048m to support the 'place shaping' agenda. This would bring the total available funding to £28.591m, and proposals setting out how this funding will be used will be the subject of a further report during the spring which will involve detailed engagement with Members.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there were 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the Annual Capital Strategy Report 2020/2021 as set out at Appendix 1 be approved.

11. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2020/21 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

During the course of debate on this item in relation to voluntary sector proposals, declarations of interest were received from Councillors S. Skivens, C.P. Mann, D.T. Davies, D. Havard, C. Gordon, A.G. Higgs and P.J. Bevan. Details are minuted at the point of debate.

Consideration was given to the report, which had been supported by Cabinet at its meeting on 12th February 2020, and sought Council's endorsement of the budget proposals for 2020/21. The report also provided a brief update on the medium-term financial outlook.

Council were provided with an overview of the key features of the report, which set out details of updated 2020/21 budget proposals reflecting the favourable Financial Settlement announced by Welsh Government on 16th December 2019 and feedback from the budget

consultation process. Members noted the positive changes that had been made to the final set of budget proposals, including the reduction in the proposed Council Tax increase from 6.95% to 4.7% which will allow the Council to deliver a balanced budget, a £0.5m budget allocation for environmental improvements across key sites, £4m earmarked for a number of exciting schemes as part of the Council's 'place-shaping agenda', protection of school and social care budgets, the removal of the budget for the Deputy Chief Executive post, and a reduction in proposed savings from £8.485m to £3.047m.

Members were advised that a number of draft savings proposals had been withdrawn or deferred following the recent public consultation process and favourable Settlement, including proposed savings relating to school budgets, school crossing patrols, CCTV, school meals prices and highways maintenance, and residents were thanked for their help in shaping the budget proposals. Reference was made to the proposal to reduce the planned Council Tax increase to a lower rate of 4.7%, and it was highlighted to Members that Caerphilly residents are paying significantly less Council Tax compared to neighbouring local authorities. In addition, a third of properties are in Band B and over 10,000 properties across the county borough are exempted from paying Council Tax.

It was emphasised that the updated proposals demonstrate how the Council have responded positively to the consultation process and are listening to their residents. Council were reminded of the challenges that still lay ahead and were advised that savings will continue to be made in advance wherever possible, particularly in areas where there is no impact to public services.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved, subject to an amendment to defer savings proposal B06 for the proposed closure of Ynys Hywel Farm (£40k) pending a service review, which would see savings in advance being reduced by £40k, and therefore the contribution to capital earmarked reserves being reduced by the same amount.

Members expressed their thanks to all staff involved in the preparation of the detailed report and for their contributions towards the budget setting process.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members welcomed the deferral of many of the draft savings proposals but expressed concerns surrounding the proposed cuts to the Voluntary Sector budget, the impact to residents of a rise in Council Tax rates, and uncertainty around the future of savings proposals that had been withdrawn pending service reviews.

Concerns were specifically expressed regarding the impact of the proposed service review of the voluntary sector budget, and an amendment to the report recommendations was moved and seconded, in that this review not proceed and that the £80k reduction to the Voluntary Sector budget be removed from the list of savings proposals.

Debate took place on the amendment and Members were advised that the review is being carried out in order to provide clarity on matters such as the funding mechanisms and Service Level Agreements between the Council and voluntary sector organisations. It was further explained that it would be remiss of the Council under their fiscal responsibilities not to carry out a review of how this funding is distributed. Officers also responded to a query in respect of funding for Caerphilly MIND, and confirmed that this organisation has received funding from Caerphilly Council in the past, and currently receives funding from the Gwent Regional Partnership Board.

In view of the proposed amendment, several Members sought advice on whether or not they were required to declare an interest as a result of their connections with the voluntary sector. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that declarations would apply in respect of those

organisations who would be affected by the amendment, but would be classed as a personal and non-prejudicial interest. On this basis, the following declarations were received:

Councillor S. Skivens declared a personal interest as a trustee of Caerphilly Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor C.P. Mann declared a personal interest as a trustee of Caerphilly and Blaenau Citizens Advice Bureau, and trustee of Groundwork Caerffili/Wales.

Councillor D.T. Davies declared a personal interest as a trustee of Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor D. Havard declared a personal interest as a trustee (Director) of Groundwork Wales and a trustee (Director) of Monmouthshire Farms Trust.

Councillor C. Gordon declared a personal interest as a board member of Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor A.G. Higgs declared a personal interest as a CCBC representative on GAVO committees.

Councillor P.J. Bevan declared a personal interest as a trustee of Right From The Start.

As the interests were personal only, all Members who had declared an interest remained in the Chamber during consideration of the amendment and were able to vote.

The vote was then taken on the amendment and by way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there were 17 for, 36 against and 2 abstentions) was declared lost.

Debate took place on the substantive motion and in citing examples, a Member expressed concerns regarding the impact on staffing levels and service delivery arising from vacancy management and unfilled posts. It was explained that there are valid reasons for staffing levels in certain departments and the Interim Chief Executive offered to discuss the specifics with the Member following the meeting. It was acknowledged that the Council's 'salami slicing' approach towards austerity measures cannot be sustained and as part of the new Team Caerphilly Transformation Strategy, work will be undertaken with Members and the public to establish what service standards can be delivered with the resources that are available, and also how other agencies such as the voluntary sector may be able to offer support in this regard.

A Member queried if any of the consultation responses had suggested the reversal of part-night street lighting measures, and was advised that no specific responses had been received, although some concerns from residents had been raised over the new measures. In general, the decision taken in 2018 has been supported by residents, and the benefits were now being realised in terms of carbon savings and supporting the Council's commitment towards tackling the climate emergency. It was also confirmed that 239 responses to the budget proposals had been received through online surveys, with further representations made through social media, viewpoint panels and drop in sessions. It was noted that further details were set out in the budget consultation summary document appended to the main report.

A Member asked how much residents pay for Band B council tax in comparison to neighbouring authorities. Officers confirmed that for the current year, CCBC properties in Band B are paying £879.83 compared to £1281.47 for Blaenau Gwent and £1236.94 for Merthyr Tydfil. Although these are some of the higher comparisons, it was emphasised that overall, Caerphilly Council remains in the lowest quartile for Wales across all bandings, which will still be the case with the proposed increase.

A Member referred to the consultation process on the original draft proposals and suggested that the variance between the draft and final budget proposals had created revenue gains in the region of £3.5m, and that this could create scope to further reduce the level of Council Tax increase to 3%. In addition, the Member referred to the level of Council Tax revenue earmarked for pension liabilities and suggested that such costs could escalate in future years. The Member also asked if it would be possible to retain the £3.8m of revenue earmarked for transfer into the capital fund and utilise the underspend in the capital fund to clear existing projects and act as a reset of the capital fund programme.

The Interim Head of Business Improvement Services & Acting Section 151 Officer responded to the queries and explained that not making the revenue contribution to capital would be feasible for one year only but that this would then require further savings to be found from 2021/22 onwards.

In relation to the query around the pension fund, Council were reminded that there has been ongoing significant dialogue around this item, with the Audit Committee also receiving a presentation on this matter from the Pension Fund Actuary in January 2020. At that meeting, the Actuary gave a clear presentation to set the scene, explaining that the pension deficit calculated by the Actuary had reduced in recent years due to better returns on investments, and the Audit Committee were given assurances that matters are under control. Council were asked to note that due to the current situation and good returns on investments, the Actuary report has recommended that the Council can freeze any increase in contributions for two years.

In terms of the Member's reference to capital programme underspend, Council were reminded that a capital budget monitoring report had been prepared for the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in January 2020 which showed a projected carry forward figure of £54m. However, it was explained that this funding is already committed to ongoing schemes or has been set aside for specific areas, including Capital Earmarked Reserves, the Housing Revenue Account, the Education Maintenance Grant and the 21st Century Schools Band B programme.

Following due debate, a further amendment to the report recommendations was then moved and seconded, in that the level of Council Tax increase be reduced to 3.5%, which would leave a budget deficit in the region of £600k. After further discussion surrounding the motion, the vote was taken on the amendment and by way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there were 13 for and 34 against) was declared lost.

Having already moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved (and incorporating the amendment in respect of Ynys Hywel), voting then took place on the substantive motion. By way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there were 11 against with 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Revenue Budget proposals for 2020/21 of £356.130m as detailed throughout the report and summarised in Appendix 1 be approved;
- (ii) the proposed savings for 2020/21 totalling £3.007m (the revised figure which takes into account the removal of savings proposal B06 in relation to Ynys Hywel pending service review) as set out in paragraph 5.4.3. and Appendix 2 of the report be approved;
- (iii) the proposal to allocate £500k from savings in advance to Environmental Projects as set out in paragraph 5.4.7 and 5.4.8 of the report be approved;

- (iv) the proposal to allocate the balance of £1.431m (the revised figure which takes into account the removal of savings proposal B06 in relation to Ynys Hywel pending service review) from savings in advance to Capital Earmarked Reserves pending the preparation of a report in the spring setting out details of capital investments to support the Council's 'place shaping' agenda (paragraph 5.4.7 of the report) be approved;
- (v) the recommendation of the Acting Section 151 Officer to maintain the General Fund balance at 3% of the 2020/21 Net Revenue Budget i.e. £10.684m (paragraph 5.5.5 of the report) be approved;
- (vi) the proposal to allocate the projected surplus General Fund balance of £2.577m to Capital Earmarked Reserves to support investments in the 'place shaping' agenda (paragraph 5.5.5 of the report) be approved;
- (vii) the proposed Capital Programme for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 4 of the report be approved;
- (viii) the proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.7% for the 2020/21 financial year to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved (Council Tax Band D being set at £1,184.38) be approved;
- (ix) the updated position on the medium-term financial outlook be noted.

12. COUNCIL TAX SETTING RESOLUTION 2020/21

Consideration was given to the report which provided details of the Authority's Council Tax for the 2020/21 financial year, prior to passing the necessary statutory resolutions.

It was moved and seconded that the resolutions contained in the Officer's report be approved and by way of the electronic voting system (and in noting there were 8 against with 3 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED: -

1. That it be noted that at its meeting on the 11th December 2019 the Cabinet calculated the following amounts for the year 2020/2021 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and powers granted under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Functions and Responsibilities) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

- (a) **60,549.25** Being the amount calculated by the Cabinet, in accordance with Regulation (3) of The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995 (as amended), as its council tax base for the year.

- (b) **Part of Council's Area:**

	<u>Tax Base</u>
	<u>No. of D Band</u>
	<u>Equivalent Properties</u>
Aber Valley	2,010.87
Argoed	852.64
Bargoed	3,638.83
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	3,823.98
Blackwood	2,955.96
Caerphilly	6,266.13
Darren Valley	713.87
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	616.61
Gelligaer	6,302.86

	<u>Tax Base</u>
	<u>No. of D Band</u>
	<u>Equivalent Properties</u>
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	1,491.09
Maesycwmmmer	859.50
Nelson	1,596.35
New Tredegar	1,352.33
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	4,443.12
Rhymney	2,552.37
Risca East	2,050.54
Risca West	1,817.32
Van	1,648.91
Remainder	<u>15,555.97</u>
Total	<u>60,549.25</u>

being the amounts calculated by the cabinet, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

2. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2020/2021 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:-
 - (a) **£356,976,243** *being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (d) of the Act;*
 - (b) **£1,050,000** *being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) (a) to (c) of the Act;*
 - (c) **£355,926,243** *being the amount by which the aggregate at (2)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (2)(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;*
 - (d) **£283,367,180** *being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, an authority's council tax reduction scheme or additional grant;*

- (e) **£1,198.35** *being the amount at (2)(c) above less the amount at (2)(d) above, all be divided by the amount at (1)(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;*
- (f) **£845,742** *being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in section 34(1) of the Act;*
- (g) **£1,184.38** *being the amount at (2)(e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (2)(f) above by the amount at (1)(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates;*

(h) Part of the Council's Area	Total County Borough & Community Council Band D		
	Local Precept	County Borough Levy	Charge
	£	£	£
Aber Valley	19.89	1,184.38	1,204.27
Argoed	15.00	1,184.38	1,199.38
Bargoed	24.98	1,184.38	1,209.36
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	24.12	1,184.38	1,208.50
Blackwood	20.00	1,184.38	1,204.38
Caerphilly	15.50	1,184.38	1,199.88
Darren Valley	18.18	1,184.38	1,202.56
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	24.33	1,184.38	1,208.71
Gelligaer	20.51	1,184.38	1,204.89
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	22.55	1,184.38	1,206.93
Maesycwmmmer	21.29	1,184.38	1,205.67
Nelson	18.18	1,184.38	1,202.56
New Tredegar	12.51	1,184.38	1,196.89
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	14.22	1,184.38	1,198.60
Rhymney	13.71	1,184.38	1,198.09
Risca East	12.00	1,184.38	1,196.38
Risca West	26.50	1,184.38	1,210.88
Van	16.68	1,184.38	1,201.06
Remainder	0.00	1,184.38	1,184.38

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (2)(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at (1)(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts, of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;

(i)

Valuation Bands	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
County Borough Council	789.59	921.18	1,052.78	1,184.38	1,447.58	1,710.77	1,973.97	2,368.76	2,763.55
Community Councils									
Aber Valley	13.26	15.47	17.68	19.89	24.31	28.73	33.15	39.78	46.41
Argoed	10.00	11.67	13.33	15.00	18.33	21.67	25.00	30.00	35.00
Bargoed	16.65	19.43	22.20	24.98	30.53	36.08	41.63	49.96	58.29
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	16.08	18.76	21.44	24.12	29.48	34.84	40.20	48.24	56.28
Blackwood	13.33	15.56	17.78	20.00	24.44	28.89	33.33	40.00	46.67
Caerphilly	10.33	12.06	13.78	15.50	18.94	22.39	25.83	31.00	36.17
Darren Valley	12.12	14.14	16.16	18.18	22.22	26.26	30.30	36.36	42.42
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	16.22	18.92	21.63	24.33	29.74	35.14	40.55	48.66	56.77
Gelligaer	13.67	15.95	18.23	20.51	25.07	29.63	34.18	41.02	47.86
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	15.03	17.54	20.04	22.55	27.56	32.57	37.58	45.10	52.62
Maesycwmmmer	14.19	16.56	18.92	21.29	26.02	30.75	35.48	42.58	49.68
Nelson	12.12	14.14	16.16	18.18	22.22	26.26	30.30	36.36	42.42
New Tredegar	8.34	9.73	11.12	12.51	15.29	18.07	20.85	25.02	29.19
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	9.48	11.06	12.64	14.22	17.38	20.54	23.70	28.44	33.18
Rhymney	9.14	10.66	12.19	13.71	16.76	19.80	22.85	27.42	31.99
Risca East	8.00	9.33	10.67	12.00	14.67	17.33	20.00	24.00	28.00
Risca West	17.67	20.61	23.56	26.50	32.39	38.28	44.17	53.00	61.83
Van	11.12	12.97	14.83	16.68	20.39	24.09	27.80	33.36	38.92
Remainder	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Valuation Bands	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Totals For Community Council Areas									
Aber Valley	802.85	936.65	1,070.46	1,204.27	1,471.89	1,739.50	2,007.12	2,408.54	2,809.96
Argoed	799.59	932.85	1,066.11	1,199.38	1,465.91	1,732.44	1,998.97	2,398.76	2,798.55
Bargoed	806.24	940.61	1,074.98	1,209.36	1,478.11	1,746.85	2,015.60	2,418.72	2,821.84
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	805.67	939.94	1,074.22	1,208.50	1,477.06	1,745.61	2,014.17	2,417.00	2,819.83
Blackwood	802.92	936.74	1,070.56	1,204.38	1,472.02	1,739.66	2,007.30	2,408.76	2,810.22
Caerphilly	799.92	933.24	1,066.56	1,199.88	1,466.52	1,733.16	1,999.80	2,399.76	2,799.72
Darren Valley	801.71	935.32	1,068.94	1,202.56	1,469.80	1,737.03	2,004.27	2,405.12	2,805.97
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	805.81	940.10	1,074.41	1,208.71	1,477.32	1,745.91	2,014.52	2,417.42	2,820.32
Gelligaer	803.26	937.13	1,071.01	1,204.89	1,472.65	1,740.40	2,008.15	2,409.78	2,811.41
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	804.62	938.72	1,072.82	1,206.93	1,475.14	1,743.34	2,011.55	2,413.86	2,816.17
Maesycwmmmer	803.78	937.74	1,071.70	1,205.67	1,473.60	1,741.52	2,009.45	2,411.34	2,813.23
Nelson	801.71	935.32	1,068.94	1,202.56	1,469.80	1,737.03	2,004.27	2,405.12	2,805.97
New Tredegar	797.93	930.91	1,063.90	1,196.89	1,462.87	1,728.84	1,994.82	2,393.78	2,792.74
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	799.07	932.24	1,065.42	1,198.60	1,464.96	1,731.31	1,997.67	2,397.20	2,796.73
Rhymney	798.73	931.84	1,064.97	1,198.09	1,464.34	1,730.57	1,996.82	2,396.18	2,795.54
Risca East	797.59	930.51	1,063.45	1,196.38	1,462.25	1,728.10	1,993.97	2,392.76	2,791.55
Risca West	807.26	941.79	1,076.34	1,210.88	1,479.97	1,749.05	2,018.14	2,421.76	2,825.38
Van	800.71	934.15	1,067.61	1,201.06	1,467.97	1,734.86	2,001.77	2,402.12	2,802.47
Remainder	789.59	921.18	1,052.78	1,184.38	1,447.58	1,710.77	1,973.97	2,368.76	2,763.55

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (2)(g) and (2)(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular

valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

3. That it be noted that for the year 2020/2021 the major precepting authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Precepting Authority</u>									
Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent	181.97	212.30	242.63	272.96	333.62	394.28	454.93	545.92	636.91

4. That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (2)(i) and (3) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts of Council Tax for the year 2020/2021 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Aber Valley	984.82	1,148.95	1,313.09	1,477.23	1,805.51	2,133.78	2,462.05	2,954.46	3,446.87
Argoed	981.56	1,145.15	1,308.74	1,472.34	1,799.53	2,126.72	2,453.90	2,944.68	3,435.46
Bargoed	988.21	1,152.91	1,317.61	1,482.32	1,811.73	2,141.13	2,470.53	2,964.64	3,458.75
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	987.64	1,152.24	1,316.85	1,481.46	1,810.68	2,139.89	2,469.10	2,962.92	3,456.74
Blackwood	984.89	1,149.04	1,313.19	1,477.34	1,805.64	2,133.94	2,462.23	2,954.68	3,447.13
Caerphilly	981.89	1,145.54	1,309.19	1,472.84	1,800.14	2,127.44	2,454.73	2,945.68	3,436.63
Darren Valley	983.68	1,147.62	1,311.57	1,475.52	1,803.42	2,131.31	2,459.20	2,951.04	3,442.88
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	987.78	1,152.40	1,317.04	1,481.67	1,810.94	2,140.19	2,469.45	2,963.34	3,457.23
Gelligaer	985.23	1,149.43	1,313.64	1,477.85	1,806.27	2,134.68	2,463.08	2,955.70	3,448.32
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	986.59	1,151.02	1,315.45	1,479.89	1,808.76	2,137.62	2,466.48	2,959.78	3,453.08
Maesycwmmmer	985.75	1,150.04	1,314.33	1,478.63	1,807.22	2,135.80	2,464.38	2,957.26	3,450.14
Nelson	983.68	1,147.62	1,311.57	1,475.52	1,803.42	2,131.31	2,459.20	2,951.04	3,442.88
New Tredegar	979.90	1,143.21	1,306.53	1,469.85	1,796.49	2,123.12	2,449.75	2,939.70	3,429.65
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	981.04	1,144.54	1,308.05	1,471.56	1,798.58	2,125.59	2,452.60	2,943.12	3,433.64
Rhymney	980.70	1,144.14	1,307.60	1,471.05	1,797.96	2,124.85	2,451.75	2,942.10	3,432.45
Risca East	979.56	1,142.81	1,306.08	1,469.34	1,795.87	2,122.38	2,448.90	2,938.68	3,428.46
Risca West	989.23	1,154.09	1,318.97	1,483.84	1,813.59	2,143.33	2,473.07	2,967.68	3,462.29
Van	982.68	1,146.45	1,310.24	1,474.02	1,801.59	2,129.14	2,456.70	2,948.04	3,439.38
Remainder	971.56	1,133.48	1,295.41	1,457.34	1,781.20	2,105.05	2,428.90	2,914.68	3,400.46

The meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2020 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR