



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor M. Adams - Mayor
Councillor J. Simmonds - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

E. M. Aldworth, C. Andrews, A. Angel, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, S. Cook, C. Cuss, E. Davies, T. D. Davies MBE, N. Dix, G. Ead, G. Enright, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C. Forehead, E. Forehead, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, D. Harse, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, M. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, J. Jones, S. Kent, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, C. Mann, A. McConnell, B. Miles, C. Morgan, S. Morgan, B. Owen, T. Parry, L. Phipps, M. Powell, H. Pritchard, J. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Rao, J. Reed, J. Roberts, J. Scriven, S. Skivens, E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L. Whittle, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade and C. Wright.

Together with:

D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Corporate Director Economy and Environment), G. Jenkins (Interim Corporate Director Social Services), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), L. Sykes (Deputy Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services), R. Williams (Group Accountant Treasury and Capital), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). He advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Cushing, C. Elsbury, J.E. Fussell, T. Heron, D.W.R. Preece, D. Price, R. Saralis and K. Woodland, together with C. Harrhy (Chief Executive).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

There were no awards to be presented.

Councillor C. Mann presented a letter, in relation to Coffi Vista, to the Mayor.

4. COUNCIL HELD ON 29TH NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of Council held on 29th November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

5. NOTICE OF MOTION – WALES LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT

Consideration was given to the report which asked Council to consider the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report and to make an appropriate recommendation. In accordance with Rule 11(3) of the Constitution, to expedite business, the Mayor agreed to allow the Motion to be dealt with by Council without the Motion first being discussed at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Notice of Motion had been received from Councillor S. Morgan (Leader of Council) and supported by Councillors J. Pritchard, N. George, E. Stenner, S. Cook, C. Andrews, P. Leonard, E. Forehead, C. Morgan, L. Whittle and N. Dix.

The Leader of Council presented the Notice of Motion. Council was asked to write to the UK Government and call on the UK Conservative Government to invest in public services, including health, education and local government services and provide a fair settlement to the Welsh Government in order that services in Wales can be properly funded. Council was also asked to call upon Conservative Ministers to announce additional investment in the budget in March and to condemn the utterly inadequate settlement for Wales announced by the UK Conservative Government in the Autumn Statement.

The Leader of the Plaid Cymru group addressed Council to express support for the Notice of Motion. Reference was made to HS2 in that it has not resulted in any additional funding for Welsh infrastructure projects.

The Leader of the Independent group also addressed Council to express support for the Notice of Motion. It was argued that money given to Wales should be passed onto local government rather than spent on national projects.

A Member voiced his disappointment in regard to the Financial Settlement, with Caerphilly receiving one of the lowest increases in Council funding from Welsh Government. In response, Members were advised that the Leader of Council has written to Welsh Government and lobbied Welsh Government in many meetings regarding this matter.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 57 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions) the Notice of Motion was unanimously supported.

RESOLVED that the Notice of Motion be supported.

6. PUBLICATION OF THE PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval from Council for the publication of the Authority's Pay Policy Statement 2024/25. It was noted that the Pay Policy Statement contained the full details of the remuneration position for the Council for 2024/25 and it is a

statement of fact. Members were informed it is a legislative requirement that this information is published on an annual basis by 31st March each year, once agreed by Council. The Pay Policy Statement will be published on the Council's Website and will be available for access by members of the public.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways referred Council to Appendix D of the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 and Members were asked note that Increment 3 for a Director should be £134,128.

Clarification was provided on the pay multiple data, in relation to the multiple between the annual salary of the lowest paid Council employee and the Chief Executive (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio.

In response to a Member's query, the Head of People Services confirmed that the spot salaries for the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive were agreed in accordance with the decision of Council and the only change to those salaries would be the national pay awards. In response to a further query, it was confirmed that the only vacancy in the Senior Management Structure is the Head of Regeneration and Planning.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 56 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 (Version 13) be agreed for publication on the Council's website.

7. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25

Consideration was given to the report which sought Council approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2024/25 financial year. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance provided a summary of the report.

A Member asked how residents have already benefited from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance reported that with the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme there are 16,098 households in the borough who receive support with their Council Tax payments and 13,874 of those households receive a 100% reduction of their Council Tax bill.

Another Member asked how many working families receive a reduction of their Council Tax bill and how many of those are in full time employment. In response, the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer advised that it would be difficult to extract this information from the system, however should the information be available it would be shared subsequent to the meeting.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 56 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The current Council Tax Reduction Scheme be continued for the 2024/25 financial year along with the previously agreed local discretions.

8. CAPITAL STRATEGY REPORT 2024/25

Consideration was given to the report which asked Council to approve the Authority's Capital Strategy report for the 2024/25 financial year in accordance with the Prudential Code that was introduced by the Local Government Act 2003. The report cross-referenced to the report by the Deputy Chief Executive on Revenue and Capital Budgets ["the budget report"]; and the Treasury Management Annual Strategy, Capital Finance Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Report for 2024/2025.

The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer responded to a number of queries raised regarding the Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27. It was explained that capital expenditure is profiled in line with planned expenditure and if, for any reason, it is not delivered then it can be carried forward to future financial years. It was also explained that the unallocated core budget is not allocated to any specific projects at the present time, however there will be a significant shortfall in the funding that is required for the work being undertaken by Mobilising Team Caerphilly as well as the Caerphilly Place Shaping Plan.

Members were advised that in the coming months the unallocated core capital budget will be allocated to specific proposals and a report will be brought forward to Cabinet and Council for consideration. A Member suggested that some of the unallocated core budget be used against some of the draft savings proposals that have hit residents particularly hard, such as the increase in fees for the use of outdoor sports pitches. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer highlighted the significant elements of temporary measures already in the draft budget proposals for 2024/25, including the proposed use of reserves, and stressed that this is not a sustainable or an appropriate approach. Responding to the queries raised, the Leader of Council pointed out that most of the capital projects receive extra funding from UK or the Welsh Government.

During the course of discussion, a number of concerns were raised regarding project completion times and the probability of overspends. The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer explained that the figures in the report are based on best estimates at the present time and advice received from budget holders and other partners when putting bids together. All projects will be kept under close review and the budget monitoring reports will keep Members updated in terms of expenditure against the budgets. The Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance also responded to the concerns raised. It was acknowledged that projects could take longer than expected, however that would not deter the Council from taking projects forward.

A discussion took place regarding the Caerphilly 2035 Programme and the recent consultation events. A number of queries were raised regarding the public consultation and a Member asked what projects have changed as a result. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change informed that, on balance, residents were in favour of most of the proposals and that feedback would continuously be reviewed. All Members were encouraged to attend future engagement sessions and consultation events.

Councillor G. Enright requested a response to his written concerns regarding the free public WiFi in Ystad Mynach, which was noted by the Mayor.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 51 For, 1 Against and 7 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The annual Capital Strategy Report be approved.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL STRATEGY, CAPITAL FINANCE PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY FOR 2024/25.

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval for the Authority's Annual Strategy for Treasury Management and a dataset of Prudential Indicators relevant to Treasury Management and Capital Finance. It was noted that the report cross-referenced to the report by the Deputy Chief Executive on Revenue and Capital Budgets ["the budget report"] which was also being considered at the Council meeting. The report also sought approval of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy to be adopted by the Authority for 2024/2025. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance provided a summary of the report.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 51 For, 1 Against and 7 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The Annual Strategy for Treasury Management 2024/25 be approved.
2. The strategy be reviewed quarterly within the Treasury Management monitoring reports presented to the Corporate and Regeneration 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 quarterly reports on Treasury Management activities.
3. The Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management be approved as per Appendix 5.
4. The Prudential Indicators for Capital Financing be approved as per Appendices 6 and 7.
5. The MRP policy as set out in Appendix 8 be adopted.
6. The continuation of the 2023/24 investment strategy and the lending to financial institutions and Corporates in accordance with the minimum credit rating criteria disclosed within this report be approved.
7. The Authority continues to adopt the investment grade scale as a minimum credit rating criterion to assess the credit worthiness of suitable counterparties when placing investments.
8. The monetary and investment duration limits as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be adopted.

10. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024/25

Consideration was given to the report which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 27th February 2024 and sought Council's endorsement of the budget proposals for 2024/25.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance presented the report which provided details of a range of cost and service pressures that required funding, proposed permanent and temporary savings, the proposed one-off use of reserves, and a proposed increase of 6.9% in Council Tax to enable the Authority to set a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance appreciated that no-one wanted to see an increase in Council Tax, but pointed out that without this increase the Council would need to consider more unpalatable and unpopular cuts to services. It was reported that a 6.9% increase would raise the Caerphilly County Borough Council Band D precept from £1,353.01 to £1,446.37, which is an annual increase of £93.36 or £1.80 per week. Members were advised that the proposed increase is likely to mean that Caerphilly County Borough Council will have the lowest Council Tax in Wales for the forthcoming financial year.

Members were informed that the strategic use of reserves was also an important element in the 2024/25 budget considerations. It was highlighted that the proposed allocation of £10.6m from reserves, as a one-off measure, has been made possible thanks to the prudent management of corporate reserves over recent years. As a result, this would provide the much-needed breathing space to develop savings proposals under Mobilising Team Caerphilly, however it was stressed that the use of reserves in the medium to longer-term is not a sustainable option.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance highlighted the significant financial challenges the Council is facing over the next few years. Members were asked to note that in the next financial year alone the Council has a savings requirement of more than £41m, and that due to the temporary nature of some of the measures proposed to balance the 2024/25 budget, there would still be a residual savings requirement of £45m over the following two-year period. It was explained that very difficult decisions will need to be made and that the focus must remain on looking at how the Council delivers sustainable services that meet the present and future needs of communities in an extremely challenging financial environment. Members were informed of the work that is being done at all levels across the organisation, to reshape and reconfigure the way the Council does things as part of its ambitious transformation programme, Mobilising Team Caerphilly, and that this work will become even more critical over the coming years.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance put on record her thanks to all those who have been involved in the preparation of the report for all their hard work. She also thanked staff at all levels across the organisation who form part of Mobilising Team Caerphilly, for doing their bit to make improvements and deliver efficiencies for the residents of the county borough. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change formally seconded the budget proposals for 2024/25.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces was asked to provide an update on the proposed increase in fees for the use of outdoor sports pitches. It was reported that the Cabinet has listened to the concerns raised by Members and feedback from the public consultation, and whilst bearing in mind the costs, have proposed a tiered increase in fees for the use of outdoor sports pitches (rugby, football, and cricket). Senior age groups will have a higher proportion of the increase than the junior, youth, and mini age groups. The Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces pointed out that even with a 20% rise the full cost of using these facilities, including maintenance, would not be covered.

Reference was made to the number of Councils issuing Section 114 Notices, which effectively meant that these Councils were serving notice that they were unable to deliver a balanced budget. In response to a Member's query, the Leader of Council explained what it would mean for residents, staff and Elected Members if a Section 114 Notice was issued for Caerphilly, highlighting reduced services, job losses and Council decisions being taken by government appointed commissioners. Assurances were given by the Leader of Council, that due to the prudent governance of the Council's finances over many years, Caerphilly is not in a position where a Section 114 Notice is being considered.

Responding to a query raised, the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer informed Members that the savings proposals residents particularly supported as part of responses received to the budget consultation process were the proposed closure of Coffi Vista,

followed by the Mothballing of the Winding House. Members were asked to note the link to the full overview of comments received through the consultation, included in section 10 of the report.

In response to a Member's query, the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer highlighted the significant impact of a continued reliance on reserves to balance budgets, and provided examples of earmarked capital projects that would potentially be cancelled if the Council continues to deplete its reserves.

During the course of discussion, a number of concerns were raised in relation to the public consultation on the draft savings proposals for 2024/25 and some Members argued that the Council had not listened to the views of residents. A Member asked if any changes had been made to the draft savings proposals to support the comments and views of residents. In response, Members heard how the views of residents have been taken on board, and that difficult decisions are made based on the money available to the Council at that time. As an example of change, the proposal for a tiered increase in fees for the use of outdoor sports pitches was highlighted. The opportunity for Members to get involved in the budget setting process and the opportunity to put forward alternative budget proposals was highlighted.

An update was requested on the savings proposal to include an initial 2024/25 in-year savings target of £5m for the Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer informed Members that there are a number of projects currently "in flight", which are being prioritised for delivery and there is an expectation that further significant savings will be delivered in subsequent financial years once further projects have been prioritised for development and delivery. If the £5m target is exceeded, then the savings will be taken as 'savings in advance' to help offset the projected funding gap of £45.213m for 2025/26 and 2026/27. Members were advised that during the next financial year further projects will be brought forward for Member's consideration, as decisions will need to be made to address the significant funding gap the Council is facing.

Reference was made to the General Fund and the projected balance of £14.126m. In response to a Member's query, the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer clarified that the General Fund projection reflects all underspends anticipated in the current financial year and the recommendation is that 100% of the net projected underspend be transferred into the General Fund.

A Member raised concerns regarding the effect of the draft budget proposals on working families, particularly in relation to the proposed increase in Council Tax, the proposed increase in fees for the use of outdoor sports pitches and the proposed increase in charges for school meals in secondary schools. It was felt that the Council should be helping working families to alleviate the issues they face with an increasing struggling economy. The Leader of Council shared the concerns raised and it was pointed out that Caerphilly county borough residents will be paying the lowest rates of Council Tax in Wales.

A Member expressed his disappointment in the response to the consultation on the proposed 6.9% increase in Council Tax for 2024/25. The Member accepted that an increase in Council Tax was required and asked the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer if a 5% increase in Council Tax would be reasonable and not lead to a Section 114 Notice being issued. In response, Members were made aware that for every 1% reduction in the level of the proposed Council Tax increase there would be an additional savings requirement of £659,000, and it was reiterated that using reserves to address this is not a sustainable or an appropriate approach. However, the Member proposed that Council Tax be increased by 5% for the 2024/25 financial year and the remainder be taken from reserves, but this was not supported.

Further information was requested regarding the tapering of WG funding for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Schemes. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer advised Members that the tapering has been factored into the budget to reflect reductions in Welsh

Government contributions to the PFI costs. Members were also reminded of the proposed voluntary termination of the Caerphilly County Borough Council School PFI contract.

In response to a Member's question the Interim Corporate Director for Social Services outlined increased pressures faced by Social Services, in terms of complexity and demand across both Adult and Children's Services.

Responding to a question regarding Welsh Government funding, the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer clarified that on average Welsh Government support for local authority budgets is around 80%, with 20% being raised through Council Tax.

A Member referred to the proposal to close the Coffi Vista building and public toilets noted at 7.9 of the report. The Member also referred to the changes to the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25 noted at 5.3 of the report, which resulted in an increase in funding. During the course of debate an amendment was moved and seconded that £78,000 be used from the additional allocation of funding from Welsh Government to fund Coffi Vista and the public conveniences for a further 12 months.

A discussion took place on the amendment. It was emphasised that whilst the proposals in the report present a balanced financial position for 2024/25, a significant element of this is being achieved through one-off temporary measures. A long-term sustainable plan would be to allow the operation to transfer to the private sector which would reduce the subsidy burden and bolster income through any rental agreed with a private operator.

A number of comments were made to support the amendment. A Member stated that the amendment would allow reasonable time for a group to be set up to look at an asset transfer, rather than allowing the operation to transfer to the private sector and it would also support the community that currently use the facilities. Some Members argued that Coffi Vista is not just a coffee shop but serves as Caerphilly town's tourist information centre and a community hub.

Concerns were raised regarding Y Galeri, which is situated on the ground floor of the Coffi Vista building. In response, the Head of Regeneration and Planning clarified that Y Galeri would not be impacted by the draft budget proposals. A number of concerns were raised regarding the proposal to close the public toilet facilities in the Coffi Vista building. In response, it was clarified that Cadw are aware of the proposals and will be amending their website to refer to the new public toilets, which will be located in Ffos Caerphilly.

By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 22 For, 31 Against and 4 Abstentions) the amendment was declared lost by the majority present.

Rule of Procedure 9(1)

Council having sat for a total period of 3 hours, and in accordance with rule of procedure 9(1), by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation it was approved by the majority present that Standing Orders be suspended and the meeting be extended for a period of no longer than one hour in order to conclude business, the meeting in any event would not continue beyond 9.00pm.

Having already moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved, voting then took place on the substantive motion. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 38 For, 19 Against and 2 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The revenue budget proposals for 2024/25 of £449.190m as detailed throughout the report and summarised in Appendix 1 be approved.

2. The proposed increases in charges for school meals in secondary schools, Meals Direct, and the Hive Restaurant along with the proposed increase in the fee for MOT testing as detailed in paragraph 5.5.5 be approved.
3. 100% of the net projected underspend on the Council's 2023/24 revenue budget will be transferred into General Fund balances as outlined in paragraph 5.7.3 be agreed.
4. The movements on the General Fund in Appendix 4 and the projected balance as at 31 March 2024 of £14.126m be noted.
5. The proposed Capital Programme for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 5 be approved.
6. The proposal to increase Council Tax by 6.9% for the 2024/25 financial year to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved (Council Tax Band D being set at £1,446.37) be approved.
7. The indicative potential savings requirement of £45.213m for the two-year period 2025/26 to 2026/27 be noted.

11. COUNCIL TAX SETTING RESOLUTION 2024/25

Consideration was given to the report which asked Council to approve the Council Tax Resolutions for the 2024/25 financial year.

Responding to a query raised, the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer clarified it is a statutory requirement that the resolutions be submitted to Council for consideration along with the recommendation that they be approved.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 44 For, 5 Against and 4 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. That it be noted that at its meeting on the 13th December 2023 the Cabinet calculated the following amounts for the year 2024/2025 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) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (as amended).
 - (a) **61,292.66** 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:

Tax Base for each Community Council	<u>Tax Base</u> <u>No. of D Band</u> <u>Equivalent Properties</u>
Aber Valley	2,004.04
Argoed	888.77
Bargoed	3,700.00
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	4,025.28
Blackwood	2,936.94
Caerphilly	6,289.37
Darren Valley	712.73
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	620.58
Gelligaer	6,321.20

Tax Base for each Community Council	<u>Tax Base</u> <u>No. of D Band</u> <u>Equivalent Properties</u>
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	1,511.85
Maesycwmmmer	993.07
Nelson	1,593.91
New Tredegar	1,339.06
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	4,556.25
Rhymney	2,560.78
Risca East	2,043.78
Risca West	1,820.30
Van	1,626.36
Remainder	15,748.39
Total	61,292.66

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 2024/2025 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £449,189,679 *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) £11,674,000 *being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) (a), (aa) and (c) of the Act;*
- (c) £438,564,455 *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) **£348,863,814** *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) **£1,463.48** *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) **£1,048,776** *being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in section 34(1) of the Act;*
- (g) **£1,446.37** *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 Charge		
	Local Precept	County Borough Levy	
	£	£	£
Aber Valley	19.96	1,446.37	1,466.33
Argoed	16.50	1,446.37	1,462.87
Bargoed	52.31	1,446.37	1,498.68
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	29.10	1,446.37	1,475.47
Blackwood	27.50	1,446.37	1,473.87
Caerphilly	15.50	1,446.37	1,461.87
Darren Valley	18.21	1,446.37	1,464.58
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	33.84	1,446.37	1,480.21
Gelligaer	21.55	1,446.37	1,467.92
Llanbradach & Pwlypant	24.05	1,446.37	1,470.42
Maesycwmmmer	18.43	1,446.37	1,464.80
Nelson	18.24	1,446.37	1,464.61
New Tredegar	12.64	1,446.37	1,459.01
Penyrheol, Treceenydd & Energlyn	14.94	1,446.37	1,461.31
Rhymney	14.45	1,446.37	1,460.82
Risca East	17.00	1,446.37	1,463.37
Risca West	34.88	1,446.37	1,481.25
Van	19.06	1,446.37	1,465.43
Remainder	0.00	1,446.37	1,446.37

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
	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	11.00	13.00	15.00	18.00	21.00

Valuation Bands	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£

County Borough Council	964.25	1,124.95	1,285.66	1,446.37	1,767.79	2,089.20	2,410.62	2,892.74	3,374.86
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Community Councils

Aber Valley	13.31	15.52	17.74	19.96	24.40	28.83	33.27	39.92	46.57
Argoed	11.00	12.83	14.67	16.50	20.17	23.83	27.50	33.00	38.50
Bargoed	34.87	40.69	46.50	52.31	63.93	75.56	87.18	104.62	122.06
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	19.40	22.63	25.87	29.10	35.57	42.03	48.50	58.20	67.90
Blackwood	18.33	21.39	24.44	27.50	33.61	39.72	45.83	55.00	64.17
Caerphilly	10.33	12.06	13.78	15.50	18.94	22.39	25.83	31.00	36.17
Darren Valley	12.14	14.16	16.19	18.21	22.26	26.30	30.35	36.42	42.49
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	22.56	26.32	30.08	33.84	41.36	48.88	56.40	67.68	78.96
Gelligaer	14.37	16.76	19.16	21.55	26.34	31.13	35.92	43.10	50.28
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	16.03	18.71	21.38	24.05	29.39	34.74	40.08	48.10	56.12
Maesycwmmmer	12.29	14.33	16.38	18.43	22.53	26.62	30.72	36.86	43.00
Nelson	12.16	14.19	16.21	18.24	22.29	26.35	30.40	36.48	42.56
New Tredegar	8.43	9.83	11.24	12.64	15.45	18.26	21.07	25.28	29.49
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	9.96	11.62	13.28	14.94	18.26	21.58	24.90	29.88	34.86
Rhymney	9.63	11.24	12.84	14.45	17.66	20.87	24.08	28.90	33.72
Risca East	11.33	13.22	15.11	17.00	20.78	24.56	28.33	34.00	39.67
Risca West	23.25	27.13	31.00	34.88	42.63	50.38	58.13	69.76	81.39
Van	12.71	14.82	16.94	19.06	23.30	27.53	31.77	38.12	44.47
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	977.56	1,140.47	1,303.40	1,466.33	1,792.19	2,118.03	2,443.89	2,932.66	3,421.43
Argoed	975.25	1,137.78	1,300.33	1,462.87	1,787.96	2,113.03	2,438.12	2,925.74	3,413.36
Bargoed	999.12	1,165.64	1,332.16	1,498.68	1,831.72	2,164.76	2,497.80	2,997.36	3,496.92
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	983.65	1,147.58	1,311.53	1,475.47	1,803.36	2,131.23	2,459.12	2,950.94	3,442.76
Blackwood	982.58	1,146.34	1,310.10	1,473.87	1,801.40	2,128.92	2,456.45	2,947.74	3,439.03
Caerphilly	974.58	1,137.01	1,299.44	1,461.87	1,786.73	2,111.59	2,436.45	2,923.74	3,411.03
Darren Valley	976.39	1,139.11	1,301.85	1,464.58	1,790.05	2,115.50	2,440.97	2,929.16	3,417.35
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	986.81	1,151.27	1,315.74	1,480.21	1,809.15	2,138.08	2,467.02	2,960.42	3,453.82
Gelligaer	978.62	1,141.71	1,304.82	1,467.92	1,794.13	2,120.33	2,446.54	2,935.84	3,425.14
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	980.28	1,143.66	1,307.04	1,470.42	1,797.18	2,123.94	2,450.70	2,940.84	3,430.98
Maesycwmmmer	976.54	1,139.28	1,302.04	1,464.80	1,790.32	2,115.82	2,441.34	2,929.60	3,417.86
Nelson	976.41	1,139.14	1,301.87	1,464.61	1,790.08	2,115.55	2,441.02	2,929.22	3,417.42
New Tredegar	972.68	1,134.78	1,296.90	1,459.01	1,783.24	2,107.46	2,431.69	2,918.02	3,404.35
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	974.21	1,136.57	1,298.94	1,461.31	1,786.05	2,110.78	2,435.52	2,922.62	3,409.72
Rhymney	973.88	1,136.19	1,298.50	1,460.82	1,785.45	2,110.07	2,434.70	2,921.64	3,408.58
Risca East	975.58	1,138.17	1,300.77	1,463.37	1,788.57	2,113.76	2,438.95	2,926.74	3,414.53
Risca West	987.50	1,152.08	1,316.66	1,481.25	1,810.42	2,139.58	2,468.75	2,962.50	3,456.25
Van	976.96	1,139.77	1,302.60	1,465.43	1,791.09	2,116.73	2,442.39	2,930.86	3,419.33
Remainder	964.25	1,124.95	1,285.66	1,446.37	1,767.79	2,089.20	2,410.62	2,892.74	3,374.86

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 2024/2025 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	233.01	271.85	310.68	349.52	427.19	504.86	582.53	699.04	815.55

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 2024/2025 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Aber Valley	1,210.57	1,412.32	1,614.08	1,815.85	2,219.38	2,622.89	3,026.42	3,631.70	4,236.98
Argoed	1,208.26	1,409.63	1,611.01	1,812.39	2,215.15	2,617.89	3,020.65	3,624.78	4,228.91
Bargoed	1,232.13	1,437.49	1,642.84	1,848.20	2,258.91	2,669.62	3,080.33	3,696.40	4,312.47
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	1,216.66	1,419.43	1,622.21	1,824.99	2,230.55	2,636.09	3,041.65	3,649.98	4,258.31
Blackwood	1,215.59	1,418.19	1,620.78	1,823.39	2,228.59	2,633.78	3,038.98	3,646.78	4,254.58
Caerphilly	1,207.59	1,408.86	1,610.12	1,811.39	2,213.92	2,616.45	3,018.98	3,622.78	4,226.58
Darren Valley	1,209.40	1,410.96	1,612.53	1,814.10	2,217.24	2,620.36	3,023.50	3,628.20	4,232.90
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	1,219.82	1,423.12	1,626.42	1,829.73	2,236.34	2,642.94	3,049.55	3,659.46	4,269.37
Gelligaer	1,211.63	1,413.56	1,615.50	1,817.44	2,221.32	2,625.19	3,029.07	3,634.88	4,240.69
Llanbradach & Pwllpant	1,213.29	1,415.51	1,617.72	1,819.94	2,224.37	2,628.80	3,033.23	3,639.88	4,246.53
Maesycwmmmer	1,209.55	1,411.13	1,612.72	1,814.32	2,217.51	2,620.68	3,023.87	3,628.64	4,233.41
Nelson	1,209.42	1,410.99	1,612.55	1,814.13	2,217.27	2,620.41	3,023.55	3,628.26	4,232.97
New Tredegar	1,205.69	1,406.63	1,607.58	1,808.53	2,210.43	2,612.32	3,014.22	3,617.06	4,219.90
Penyrheol, Treceenydd & Energlyn	1,207.22	1,408.42	1,609.62	1,810.83	2,213.24	2,615.64	3,018.05	3,621.66	4,225.27
Rhymney	1,206.89	1,408.04	1,609.18	1,810.34	2,212.64	2,614.93	3,017.23	3,620.68	4,224.13
Risca East	1,208.59	1,410.02	1,611.45	1,812.89	2,215.76	2,618.62	3,021.48	3,625.78	4,230.08
Risca West	1,220.51	1,423.93	1,627.34	1,830.77	2,237.61	2,644.44	3,051.28	3,661.54	4,271.80
Van	1,209.97	1,411.62	1,613.28	1,814.95	2,218.28	2,621.59	3,024.92	3,629.90	4,234.88
Remainder	1,197.26	1,396.80	1,596.34	1,795.89	2,194.98	2,594.06	2,993.15	3,591.78	4,190.41

12. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's announcements were noted.

13. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 28(3)

There were no petitions received.

14. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(2)

Question received from Councillor K. Etheridge to the Leader of Council, Councillor S. Morgan

Have attended the agile and transformation event would the Leader please clarify what projects timescale and cost are being considered for Blackwood, Risca and Newbridge and the Islwyn Constituency with private sector involvement as I see rationalisation is being considered for the tourist information cafe which is operating at a loss of £100,000 per year in Caerphilly and is this correct please?

Response from the Leader of Council, Councillor S. Morgan, to Councillor K. Etheridge

Thank you Cllr Etheridge for the question and thank you for your attendance at the weekly stand ups.

Firstly, I would like to say that your question relates specifically to Blackwood, Risca, Newbridge and the Islwyn Constituency. Well, we don't make decisions on specific areas, we make decisions on behalf of the whole of the Caerphilly County Borough area and we are undertaking Transformation in the whole of the Caerphilly County Borough area.

Our service redesign will be developing services through the lens of the customer, our customers being residents of the whole of the borough, therefore as we move forward with the Transformation Programme all customers will see alternative delivery models emerging.

During the Discovery Stage of a project, we identify the wide range of options available to us in terms of improving the customer experience while also reducing the costs of service delivery. It will not be until such time as the Discovery Phase of the project concludes that we will know what private sector involvement or rationalisation projects are being considered. Only then will we be in a position to know what changes will then be made. We will of course keep Members informed and engaged along the way through our stand ups and ongoing communication.

15. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(3)

Question received from Councillor A. Hussey to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways, Councillor N. George

How much progress has been made with our asset rationalisation compared to this time last year?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways, Councillor N. George, to Councillor A. Hussey

Over the past year, Asset Rationalisation has sprung into action, facilitating the long-discussed centralisation of services within the main building of Ty Penallta. Following a substantial effort from all services this transformation is now largely complete, following the adoption of an Agile Working Policy. In practical terms, this means that the administrative footprint of all services has been reduced by adopting a 30% desk ratio. As a result, we can accommodate more services within our buildings on the site and vacate satellite buildings.

As part of this effort, Social Services have taken the opportunity to review their accommodation practices. They have identified a number of buildings across the borough that they can vacate or repurpose to consolidate into the Tredomen campus. Children's Services have already relocated to the first floor of Ty Tredomen, with Adult Services

scheduled to move across in March. Additionally, this service will be vacating multiple units in Woodfieldside, Mill Road Caerphilly and accommodation in Risca.

The initial phase has identified just under £1 million of revenue and capital benefits with future phases being mapped and quantified. The feedback from services demonstrated that the size of the accommodation is comfortable, therefore we may be able to further reduce it in future phases. Elsewhere in the corporate estate, the Electoral Services and Housing teams are in the process of vacating Ty Gilfach, and the future of this building is currently under consideration.

Within the Education portfolio, the completion of the recent Cwm Gwyddon school has led to the vacation of the former site in Abercarn, alternative uses for this site are currently being considered and Youth Services have identified that the Brooklands site in Risca is surplus to service requirements. Further to this over the past year 18 smaller sites, including gardens and extensions, have been undertaken from underused and surplus parts of the estate. Several live cases are in the pipeline for the future.

Furthermore, discussions about future public sector collaborations are underway with the NHS, Police, and other public sector partners.

16. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(12) FOR WHICH A WRITTEN RESPONSE WILL BE PROVIDED.

There were no questions received to be answered in writing.

The meeting closed at 8.03 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 18th April 2024 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR