



SPECIAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN THE CHAMBER PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY 2023 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor E.M. Aldworth - Mayor
Councillor M.A. Adams - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

C. Andrews, A.P. Angel, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, S. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, D.T. Davies MBE, N. Dix, G. Ead, C. Elsbury, G. Enright, K. Etheridge, A. Farina-Childs, C. Forehead, E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, D. Harse, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, M.P. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, J. Jones, S. Kent, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, C.P. 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. Reed, J. Roberts, J. Sadler, R. Saralis, J. Scriven, J. Simmonds, E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, L.G. Whittle, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade, K. Woodland, C. Wright

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services and Housing), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services), M. S. Williams (Corporate Director for Economy and Environment), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), A. Southcombe (Finance Manager), N. Roberts (Principal Group Accountant), S. Pugh (Head of Communications), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Minute Taker)

IN MEMORIUM

The Mayor referred to the recent passing of Mrs Margaret Davies, beloved wife of Councillor Tudor Davies MBE. Council stood for a moment's silence as a mark of respect and extended their condolences to Councillor Davies MBE at this sad time.

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing reminded those present 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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Evans, D.W.R. Preece, D. Price, J. Rao, S. Skivens and A. Whitcombe, together with Mrs C. Harry (Chief Executive).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were received in respect of Agenda Item No. 5 – Budget Proposals for 2023/24 :-

Councillors C. Elsbury and C. Wright declared a personal interest in this item as Members of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor C. Cuss declared a personal interest in this item as he is Chair of the Ael-y-Bryn Community Centre and sits on the Management Committee of St David's Community Centre and the Wigwam in Rhymney.

Councillor N. George declared a personal interest in this item as he sits on the Channel View Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor W. Williams declared a personal interest in this item as he sits on the Markham Community House and Leisure Centre Committee.

Councillor P. Leonard declared a personal interest in this item as she is Chair of the Management Committee of Channel View Community Centre.

Councillor C. Morgan declared a personal interest in this item as he is a Member of Graig-y-Rhacca Community Centre and Machen Village Hall Committees.

Councillor T. Parry declared a personal interest in this item as she is on the Management Committee of the Hengoed Community Centre

Councillor D. Cushing declared a personal interest in this item as she is Chair of Cefn Hengoed Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor H. Pritchard declared a personal interest in this item in that he is on the Community Centre Management Committee and Local Football Club Committee Member.

Councillor C. Mann declared a personal interest in this item in that he is a Member of Llanbradach Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor E. Forehead declared a personal interest in this item in that she is Chair of Van Community Centre.

Councillor A. Gair declared a personal interest in this item in that she is a Member of the Tir-y-Berth and Cascade Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor R. Chapman declared a personal interest in this item in that he is Chair of Fochriw Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor A. McConnell declared a personal interest in this item in that she is a Committee Member of the Machen Village Hall and Graig-y-Rhacca Community Centre

Councillor S. Morgan declared a personal interest in this item in that he sits on the Management Committee of Nelson Community Centre.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

3. CAPITAL STRATEGY REPORT 2023/2024

Consideration was given to the report, which outlined details of the Authority's Capital Strategy for 2023/24 in accordance with the Prudential Code that was introduced by the Local Government Act 2003 and sought Council approval on its contents. The report had been considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 23rd January 2023 who provided comments on the Capital Strategy ahead of its presentation to Council.

Council were advised that the report cross-referenced the report by the 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 2023/2024.

The Capital Strategy outlines the principles and framework at the very high level that shape the Authority's capital investment proposals. The principal aim is to deliver an affordable programme of capital consistent with the financial strategy that contributes to the achievement of the Council's priorities and objectives as set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan; consider associated risks; recognise financial constraints over the longer term; and represent value for money.

The Strategy defines at the highest level how the capital programme decision making identifies the issues and options that influence capital spending and sets out how the resources and capital programme will be managed. In addition, the Capital Strategy should comply with the Prudential Code for local authority capital investment introduced through the Local Government Act 2003, with the key objectives of the Code being to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.

There were no questions received and it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation and in noting that there were 56 for, 3 against and 4 abstentions, this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the annual Capital Strategy Report for 2023/2024 be approved.

4. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL STRATEGY, CAPITAL FINANCE PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY FOR 2023/2024

Consideration was given to the report, which sought Council approval of the Authority's Annual Strategy for Treasury Management and a dataset of Prudential Indicators relevant to Treasury Management and Capital Finance. The report cross-referenced the report by the Chief Executive on Revenue and Capital Budgets ["the budget report"]; also considered in this meeting. The report also sought approval of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy to be adopted by the Authority for 2023/2024. It was noted that the report had been presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 23rd January 2023, who provided comments on the report ahead of its presentation to Council.

Council was advised that the revised "Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services" requires an Annual Strategy to be submitted to Members on or before the start of a financial year to outline the activities planned within the parameters of the Treasury Management Policy Statement and the Treasury Management Practices. The Local Government Act 2003 also requires the Authority to set out its Treasury Management Strategy for borrowing for the forthcoming year and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy, which sets out the policies for managing its investments, giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. The Authority is also obliged to approve and publish a number of indicators relevant to Capital Finance and Treasury Management and to prepare an annual Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement.

A Member sought clarification on the financial security of £30m in Lender's Option Borrower's option loans as detailed in Section 5.7.5 of the report. Officers confirmed that there are currently no issues with these particular loans and there have been no representations made to increase the interest at this present time. However, these loans are kept under review through the Council's external Treasury Management Adviser (Arlingclose) and if an opportunity arises for the Council to release itself from these loans if prudent to do so, consideration will be given to this and a report brought before Council.

The Member also referred to Section 5.11.4 of the report which referenced a 3.50% target rate for investments and asked whether this was a pessimistic target given the anticipated rise in interest rates. The Officer reminded Members that interest rates are extremely volatile at present and for 2022/23 investment income of around £2.3m is projected, which is £824k more than the budgeted level for the current financial year. For the next financial year, it is anticipated that investment income will be £1.9m higher than the budgeted level, and this has been included as a temporary saving within the 2023/24 budget proposals to be considered later in the meeting.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation and in noting that there were 54 for, 3 against and 6 abstentions, this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the Annual Strategy for Treasury Management 2023/24 be approved;
- (ii) the strategy be reviewed quarterly within the Treasury Management monitoring reports presented to 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 be approved as per Appendix 5 of the report;
- (iv) The Prudential Indicators for Capital Financing be approved as per Appendices 6 and 7 of the report;
- (v) the MRP policy as set out in Appendix 8 of the report be adopted;
- (vi) The continuation of the 2022/23 investment strategy and the lending to financial institutions and Corporates in accordance with the minimum credit rating criteria disclosed within this report be approved;
- (vii) approval be given for the Authority to borrow £46.8m for the General Fund to support the 2023/24 capital programme and £45.0m for the HRA WHQS and Affordable Homes programme;
- (viii) 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;
- (ix) the monetary and investment duration limits as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be adopted.

5. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2023/24

Declarations of interest were received from Councillors C. Elsbury, C. Wright, C. Cuss, N. George, W. Williams, P. Leonard, C. Morgan, T. Parry, D. Cushing, H. Pritchard, C. Mann, E. Forehead, A. Gair, R. Chapman, A. McConnell and S. Morgan. As all declarations were personal only there was no requirement for Members to leave the meeting and they could take full part in the debate and vote.

Council noted that the report had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 22nd February 2023 and sought Council's endorsement of the budget proposals for 2023/24. The report also provided an update on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Members were advised that the balanced and measured set of budget proposals demonstrate the effectiveness of the Council's ongoing financial management strategy in view of the significant budget pressures being faced by the Authority. It was emphasised that the proposals did not include any significant cuts to key services and that the Council has worked hard to protect local communities due to the prudent financial approach being undertaken, which is particularly due to the dedication and professionalism of Council staff at every level across the organisation. The Cabinet Member commended the resilience and flexibility of the workforce who have done so much to support the needs of residents across the Authority during these challenging times.

Members were advised that a fixed 6.9% uplift in the WG Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2023/24, along with the use of reserves, a range of permanent and temporary savings, and a proposed Council Tax of 7.9% had resulted in a robust budget for consideration by Members. It was acknowledged that whilst an increase in Council Tax is not desirable, without this increase the Authority would need to consider alternative savings measures which could include cuts to key services. It was noted that the proposed increase would result in a Band D increase of £1.91 per week, with it emphasised that the current levels of Council Tax for Caerphilly Council remain amongst the lowest in Wales.

Members were referred to a number of key changes to the original budget proposals that have been shaped by feedback from residents, including reconsideration of savings totalling over £600k as listed in Section 5.3.1 of the report. The Cabinet Member thanked all those who provided feedback on the budget survey and for participating in the Caerphilly Conversation which has helped to shape the way that the Council will carry out its work in the future.

The Leader of Council referenced the financial pressures being faced by the Authority and emphasised the Council's responsibilities to provide a balanced budget whilst ensuring that much-needed public services are protected. The Leader commended the efforts of the Council's workforce to support residents at every stage of their lives, together with the support given to communities throughout the pandemic and cost of living crisis, shielding the most vulnerable members of society and providing continued assistance to those in the most financial need. Members were reminded that the cost of delivering these key services will be £55m more in 2023/24 and this increase cannot simply be absorbed through existing budgets. Despite the £22m of extra funding from WG, proposed permanent savings of circa £5m, and a proposed Council Tax increase of 7.9%, this still leaves a funding shortfall equating to £22m, which will be met through the one-off use of reserves totalling £15.345m, together with a number of temporary savings. This will allow the Authority to focus on its ongoing plans to transform the organisation into a modern, agile, and sustainable Council that can achieve more with less resources.

The Leader referred to the level of reserves held by the Council and explained that the majority of these are ring-fenced for specific purposes, such as the Housing Revenue Account, school balances, pay awards, much-needed infrastructure, and 21st Century Schools match funding, and therefore cannot be used to meet the funding shortfall. In

addition, reserves can only be used once, and to continually divert these reserves to meet increased costs would mean that these would be fully depleted within three years, at the end of which the Council would be left with a funding gap of approximately £100m. Members were also reminded that if the Council were to divert reserves to meet increased costs, the county borough would miss out on hundreds of millions of pounds in external match funding opportunities. It was reiterated to Members that the Council needs to focus collective efforts on delivering services in a modern and efficient way, whilst doing everything possible to meet the long-term needs of residents and future generations.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Council discussed the proposed Council Tax increase of 7.9% and reference was made to the financial pressures already being faced by residents as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and the additional burden that this Council Tax increase would place on households. Several Members referenced the significant level of reserves held by the Council and expressed the view that these are public funds which should be used to meet the public need, and it was suggested that an additional £6m in reserves could be released to offset the proposed increase in Council Tax.

During the course of the debate, an amendment was moved and seconded in relation to Recommendation 1.3.6 of the Officer's covering report, for a 0% raise in Council Tax with no cuts to services to be funded from existing funding (reserves).

Discussion took place on the amendment and a number of Members reiterated the financial hardship being faced by residents and increased dependency on services such as food banks, which could be heightened if Council Tax were to be increased. In response to the proposed amendment, one Member sought clarification on which particular reserves would be used to meet the funding shortfall arising from a zero increase in Council Tax. Some Members expressed a need to reconsider the Council Tax increase in view of the implications for its residents, and reference was also made the level of grant funding received by the Council and to underspends arising from additional grant funding received from WG as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had increased the level of reserves held.

Officers provided clarification on the grant funding process, explaining that grants are secured for specific purposes with terms and conditions attached, and although the Council received additional one-off funding from WG during the pandemic, which was the reason why some underspends were higher than usual, these underspends were now set aside for specific purposes as previously approved by Cabinet and Council. In terms of the proposed amendment, the Section 151 Officer explained that a zero Council Tax increase would add to the temporary measures already included in the 2023/24 budget proposals and thus increase the £48m savings requirement anticipated for the two-year period 2024/25 to 2025/26.

A Member referred to the consultation responses received on the draft budget proposals and contested the Council's claim that it had listened to its residents when shaping the final proposals, given that the majority of the 271 respondents did not support a Council Tax increase or supported a lower increase instead. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance acknowledged the low consultation response rate but emphasised that a zero increase would result in a lack of investment in schools and impact on the most vulnerable residents if key services were cut instead, and she urged those residents facing financial difficulty to contact the Caerphilly Cares team to seek advice and assistance if needed.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 15.4(1) a request was made for a recorded vote on the amendment which was supported by 10 Members.

For the Amendment:

A.P. Angel, C. Bishop, D. Cushing, N. Dix, G. Ead, G. Enright, K. Etheridge, A. Farina-Childs, J.E. Fussell, M.P. James, J. Jones, S. Kent, C.P. Mann, B. Owen, T. Parry, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Reed, J. Roberts, J. Scriven, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle **(22)**

Against the Amendment:

M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, C. Andrews, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, S. Cook, C. Cuss, D.T. Davies MBE, C. Forehead, E. Forehead, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, D. Harse, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, A. McConnell, B. Miles, C. Morgan, S. Morgan, L. Phipps, M. Powell, J. Pritchard, J. Sadler, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds, E. Stenner, C. Thomas, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade, K. Woodland, C. Wright **(40)**

The amendment was declared lost by the majority present.

A further amendment was then moved and seconded in relation to Recommendation 1.3.6 of the Officer's covering report, for there to be a 4% increase in Council Tax with the £2.4m shortfall funded from reserves.

Debate took place on the further amendment and clarification was sought on which particular reserves would be used to meet the £2.4m shortfall. One Member suggested that underspends across Education and Lifelong Learning and Miscellaneous Finance could be used in this regard.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 15.4(1) a request was made for a recorded vote on the amendment which was supported by 10 Members.

For the Amendment:

A.P. Angel, C. Bishop, D. Cushing, N. Dix, G. Ead, G. Enright, K. Etheridge, A. Farina-Childs, J.E. Fussell, M.P. James, J. Jones, S. Kent, C.P. Mann, B. Owen, T. Parry, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Reed, J. Roberts, J. Taylor **(20)**

Against the Amendment:

M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, C. Andrews, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, S. Cook, C. Cuss, D.T. Davies MBE, C. Forehead, E. Forehead, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, D. Harse, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, A. McConnell, B. Miles, C. Morgan, S. Morgan, L. Phipps, M. Powell, J. Pritchard, J. Sadler, R. Saralis, J. Scriven, J. Simmonds, E. Stenner, C. Thomas, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade, K. Woodland, C. Wright **(41)**

Abstentions:

L.G. Whittle **(1)**

The amendment was declared lost by the majority present.

Debate took place on the substantive motion, and several Members expressed the need to maintain the sustainability of the Council by supporting a balanced budget.

A Member referred to the proposal to withdraw the subsidy for the Blackwood to Ystrad Mynach Rail Link bus service and expressed concerns that this could negatively impact on a significant number of commuters and did not encourage sustainable travel. Members were reminded that Transport for Wales intends to introduce additional rail services through every station across the county borough at 15-minute intervals, meaning that there will no longer be a need for a designated bus-rail service as commuters will be able to easily connect to one of the existing service buses that run between Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach, resulting in no impact to rail and bus users.

Concerns were raised regarding the proposed 12% increase in pitch fees and the financial pressures this could place on local sports clubs. It was emphasised that the Council has listened to its residents by reducing the proposed increase from 20% to 12%, and that pitch fees across the county borough remain cheaper than those in neighbouring authorities.

Members raised concerns around the proposed reduction of caretaker hours in community centres, including the potential loss of jobs and the additional pressures this would place on centre volunteers. Assurances were sought regarding the Council's commitment towards supporting community centres. The Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces explained that the Council had promised to work with every community centre and their respective committees, but the onus was very much on community use/support to ensure that these centres remain open.

Clarification was sought on how the budget proposals would support the Council's most vulnerable residents. The Cabinet Member for Social Care confirmed that there is an allocation of £9.3m in growth for Social Services, including £3.9m to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children, £2.8m to allow independent sector partners to pay the real living wage, £697k to establish the Caerphilly Cares team as a permanent service arising from the loss of funding from WG, and £232k to allow the Council to meet the additional needs of people with learning disabilities living in supported living accommodation. Furthermore, £1.7m has also been allocated to Housing to support the provision of temporary accommodation for those residents' facing homelessness.

Members asked how these budget proposals would affect funding for CCBC schools. The Cabinet Member for Education and Communities explained that in real terms this equates to a funding increase of over 8%. However, this does mean that schools are being asked to contribute to their energy bills. This budget also means that the Council will be able to continue to build new schools through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and safeguard future education for young people across the borough. In response a Member expressed his dismay that carbon footprint awareness had been cited as a reason for schools being asked to contribute towards their energy bills moving forward.

Council debated the use of reserves at length and Members emphasised the need to retain these reserves in order to invest in future infrastructure and safeguard projects for residents and future generations, including new council housing, new school buildings and regeneration projects across the county borough, together with the need to retain ring-fenced reserves for much-needed areas including winter maintenance, the apprenticeship scheme and homelessness prevention.

A query was received on the forecasted level of reserves at the end of 2022/23. The Section 151 Officer explained that there are numerous transactions that take place throughout the financial year but based on a high-level assessment at the present time, it is estimated that the reserves at the end of 2022/23 are likely to reduce to around £178m. It was emphasised that this is merely a projection at this point and circumstances could change, but the Authority is now on a downward trajectory in terms of reserve balances. Another Member sought clarification on how these reserves would be reduced, and Mr Harris explained that this would include a projected reduction of school balances from £17m to £8.4m and a reduction of £15m to balance the budget for 2023/24, together with numerous movements across other reserves by the end of the financial year.

Clarification was sought as to how businesses across the county borough would be supported, and it was noted that there would be greater investment in small businesses during 2023/24, including an extra £500k allocation in terms of the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund. Investment has also been made in a new town centre team to support businesses across the county borough and there will be an enhanced Events programme taking place in 2023, in order to aid regeneration and generate footfall across the town centres.

Assurances were sought that there would be no forced redundancies across the Council as a result of these budget proposals. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property confirmed that the budget aims to protect frontline services and residents wherever possible and confirmed that there would be no compulsory redundancies as a consequence of this budget.

Clarification was provided on the Council Tax concessionary scheme, with it noted that residents can seek advice from the Caerphilly Cares team on whether they meet the eligibility criteria. The work of the Caerphilly Cares team was further highlighted.

Clarification was sought on the £50k temporary saving against the Educational Psychology Service arising from vacancy management as a result of staff turnover, with a Member asking whether recruitment would take place to fill the vacancy in order to provide this much-needed service to schools. The Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services explained that this is very much a temporary saving for one year, owing to the degree of staff turnover in this particular field. It was explained that the Authority is nearing its full complement in terms of education psychologists.

Having already moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved, voting then took place on the substantive motion.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 15.4(1) a request was made for a recorded vote which was supported by 10 Members.

For the Motion:

M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, C. Andrews, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, S. Cook, C. Cuss, D.T. Davies MBE, C. Forehead, E. Forehead, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, D. Harse, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, A. McConnell, B. Miles, C. Morgan, S. Morgan, L. Phipps, M. Powell, J. Pritchard, J. Sadler, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds, E. Stenner, C. Thomas, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade, K. Woodland, C. Wright **(40)**

Against the Motion:

A.P. Angel, C. Bishop, D. Cushing, N. Dix, G. Ead, G. Enright, K. Etheridge, A. Farina-Childs, J.E. Fussell, M.P. James, J. Jones, S. Kent, C.P. Mann, B. Owen, T. Parry, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Reed, J. Scriven, J. Roberts, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle **(22)**

The vote on the substantive motion was declared carried by the majority present and it was

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the revenue budget proposals for 2023/24 of £438.722m as detailed throughout the report and summarised in Appendix 1 be approved;
- (ii) the proposed budget virements in relation to Additional Learning Needs as detailed in paragraph 5.3.12 be approved;
- (iii) the proposed use of £346k of the LMS Contingency Reserve as a one-off sum to support the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate's 2023/24 contribution to the 50% repairs and maintenance budget for schools (as detailed in paragraph 5.5.3) be approved;
- (iv) the movements on the General Fund in Appendix 5 and the current projected balance as at 31 March 2023 of £13.041m be noted;
- (v) the proposed Capital Programme for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 6 be approved;

- (vi) the proposal to increase Council Tax by 7.9% for the 2023/24 financial year to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved (Council Tax Band D being set at £1,353.01) be approved;
- (vii) the updated MTFP in Appendix 7 showing an indicative potential savings requirement of £48.335m for the two-year period 2024/25 to 2025/26 be noted.

6. COUNCIL TAX SETTING RESOLUTION 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval of the Council Tax Setting Resolutions for the 2023/24 financial year.

Members were asked to note amendments to the figures set out at Sections 2(a) and 2(b) of the report, in that Section 2(a) should read £438,722,307 and Section 2(b) should read £16,395,377. Members were advised that this amendment would have no impact on the Council Tax figures.

It was moved and seconded that the resolutions contained in the Officer's report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation and in noting that there were 43 for, 18 against and 0 abstentions, this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED: -

1. That it be noted that at its meeting on the 14th December 2022 the Cabinet calculated the following amounts for the year 2023/2024 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) **61,135.13** 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	2,008.28
Argoed	880.45
Bargoed	3,697.40
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	3,969.95
Blackwood	2,959.91
Caerphilly	6,284.17
Darren Valley	713.62
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	620.42
Gelligaer	6,322.88

Tax Base for each Community Council	<u>Tax Base</u> <u>No. of D Band</u> <u>Equivalent Properties</u>
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	1,504.43
Maesycwmmmer	957.98
Nelson	1,590.59
New Tredegar	1,335.80
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	4,547.97
Rhymney	2,564.25
Risca East	2,038.26
Risca West	1,819.23
Van	1,644.55
Remainder	15,674.99
Total	61,135.13

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 2023/2024 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:-
- (a) **£438,722,307** *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) **£16,395,377** *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) **£423,291,731** *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) **£339,610,488** *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) **£1,368.79** *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) **£964,801** *being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in section 34(1) of the Act;*
- (g) **£1,353.01** *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

	Local Precept £	County Borough Levy £	Total County Borough & Community Council Band D Charge £
Aber Valley	19.92	1,353.01	1,372.93
Argoed	15.50	1,353.01	1,368.51
Bargoed	46.45	1,353.01	1,399.46
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	27.71	1,353.01	1,380.72
Blackwood	20.00	1,353.01	1,373.01
Caerphilly	15.50	1,353.01	1,368.51
Darren Valley	18.19	1,353.01	1,371.20
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	32.24	1,353.01	1,385.25
Gelligaer	21.13	1,353.01	1,374.14
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	23.58	1,353.01	1,376.59
Maesycwmmmer	19.10	1,353.01	1,372.11
Nelson	18.24	1,353.01	1,371.25
New Tredegar	12.67	1,353.01	1,365.68
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	14.50	1,353.01	1,367.51
Rhymney	14.04	1,353.01	1,367.05
Risca East	12.00	1,353.01	1,365.01
Risca West	29.00	1,353.01	1,382.01
Van	16.63	1,353.01	1,369.64
Remainder	0.00	1,353.01	1,353.01

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	902.01	1,052.34	1,202.68	1,353.01	1,653.68	1,954.35	2,255.02	2,706.02	3,157.02
Community Councils									
Aber Valley	13.28	15.49	17.71	19.92	24.35	28.77	33.20	39.84	46.48
Argoed	10.33	12.06	13.78	15.50	18.94	22.39	25.83	31.00	36.17
Bargoed	30.97	36.13	41.29	46.45	56.77	67.09	77.42	92.90	108.38
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	18.47	21.55	24.63	27.71	33.87	40.03	46.18	55.42	64.66
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	12.13	14.15	16.17	18.19	22.23	26.27	30.32	36.38	42.44
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	21.49	25.08	28.66	32.24	39.40	46.57	53.73	64.48	75.23
Gelligaer	14.09	16.43	18.78	21.13	25.83	30.52	35.22	42.26	49.30
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	15.72	18.34	20.96	23.58	28.82	34.06	39.30	47.16	55.02
Maesycwmmmer	12.73	14.86	16.98	19.10	23.34	27.59	31.83	38.20	44.57
Nelson	12.16	14.19	16.21	18.24	22.29	26.35	30.40	36.48	42.56
New Tredegar	8.45	9.85	11.26	12.67	15.49	18.30	21.12	25.34	29.56
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	9.67	11.28	12.89	14.50	17.72	20.94	24.17	29.00	33.83
Rhymney	9.36	10.92	12.48	14.04	17.16	20.28	23.40	28.08	32.76
Risca East	8.00	9.33	10.67	12.00	14.67	17.33	20.00	24.00	28.00
Risca West	19.33	22.56	25.78	29.00	35.44	41.89	48.33	58.00	67.67
Van	11.09	12.93	14.78	16.63	20.33	24.02	27.72	33.26	38.80
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	915.29	1,067.83	1,220.39	1,372.93	1,678.03	1,983.12	2,288.22	2,745.86	3,203.50
Argoed	912.34	1,064.40	1,216.46	1,368.51	1,672.62	1,976.74	2,280.85	2,737.02	3,193.19
Bargoed	932.98	1,088.47	1,243.97	1,399.46	1,710.45	2,021.44	2,332.44	2,798.92	3,265.40
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	920.48	1,073.89	1,227.31	1,380.72	1,687.55	1,994.38	2,301.20	2,761.44	3,221.68
Blackwood	915.34	1,067.90	1,220.46	1,373.01	1,678.12	1,983.24	2,288.35	2,746.02	3,203.69
Caerphilly	912.34	1,064.40	1,216.46	1,368.51	1,672.62	1,976.74	2,280.85	2,737.02	3,193.19
Darren Valley	914.14	1,066.49	1,218.85	1,371.20	1,675.91	1,980.62	2,285.34	2,742.40	3,199.46
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	923.50	1,077.42	1,231.34	1,385.25	1,693.08	2,000.92	2,308.75	2,770.50	3,232.25
Gelligaer	916.10	1,068.77	1,221.46	1,374.14	1,679.51	1,984.87	2,290.24	2,748.28	3,206.32
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	917.73	1,070.68	1,223.64	1,376.59	1,682.50	1,988.41	2,294.32	2,753.18	3,212.04
Maesycwmmmer	914.74	1,067.20	1,219.66	1,372.11	1,677.02	1,981.94	2,286.85	2,744.22	3,201.59
Nelson	914.17	1,066.53	1,218.89	1,371.25	1,675.97	1,980.70	2,285.42	2,742.50	3,199.58
New Tredegar	910.46	1,062.19	1,213.94	1,365.68	1,669.17	1,972.65	2,276.14	2,731.36	3,186.58
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	911.68	1,063.62	1,215.57	1,367.51	1,671.40	1,975.29	2,279.19	2,735.02	3,190.85
Rhymney	911.37	1,063.26	1,215.16	1,367.05	1,670.84	1,974.63	2,278.42	2,734.10	3,189.78
Risca East	910.01	1,061.67	1,213.35	1,365.01	1,668.35	1,971.68	2,275.02	2,730.02	3,185.02
Risca West	921.34	1,074.90	1,228.46	1,382.01	1,689.12	1,996.24	2,303.35	2,764.02	3,224.69
Van	913.10	1,065.27	1,217.46	1,369.64	1,674.01	1,978.37	2,282.74	2,739.28	3,195.82
Remainder	902.01	1,052.34	1,202.68	1,353.01	1,653.68	1,954.35	2,255.02	2,706.02	3,157.02

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 2023/2024 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:-

Valuation Bands	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Precepting Authority									
Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent	216.35	252.40	288.46	324.52	396.64	468.75	540.87	649.04	757.21

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 2023/2024 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Aber Valley	1,131.64	1,320.23	1,508.85	1,697.45	2,074.67	2,451.87	2,829.09	3,394.90	3,960.71
Argoed	1,128.69	1,316.80	1,504.92	1,693.03	2,069.26	2,445.49	2,821.72	3,386.06	3,950.40
Bargoed	1,149.33	1,340.87	1,532.43	1,723.98	2,107.09	2,490.19	2,873.31	3,447.96	4,022.61
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	1,136.83	1,326.29	1,515.77	1,705.24	2,084.19	2,463.13	2,842.07	3,410.48	3,978.89
Blackwood	1,131.69	1,320.30	1,508.92	1,697.53	2,074.76	2,451.99	2,829.22	3,395.06	3,960.90
Caerphilly	1,128.69	1,316.80	1,504.92	1,693.03	2,069.26	2,445.49	2,821.72	3,386.06	3,950.40
Darren Valley	1,130.49	1,318.89	1,507.31	1,695.72	2,072.55	2,449.37	2,826.21	3,391.44	3,956.67
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	1,139.85	1,329.82	1,519.80	1,709.77	2,089.72	2,469.67	2,849.62	3,419.54	3,989.46
Gelligaer	1,132.45	1,321.17	1,509.92	1,698.66	2,076.15	2,453.62	2,831.11	3,397.32	3,963.53
Llanbradach & Pwllypant	1,134.08	1,323.08	1,512.10	1,701.11	2,079.14	2,457.16	2,835.19	3,402.22	3,969.25
Maesycwmmer	1,131.09	1,319.60	1,508.12	1,696.63	2,073.66	2,450.69	2,827.72	3,393.26	3,958.80
Nelson	1,130.52	1,318.93	1,507.35	1,695.77	2,072.61	2,449.45	2,826.29	3,391.54	3,956.79
New Tredegar	1,126.81	1,314.59	1,502.40	1,690.20	2,065.81	2,441.40	2,817.01	3,380.40	3,943.79
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	1,128.03	1,316.02	1,504.03	1,692.03	2,068.04	2,444.04	2,820.06	3,384.06	3,948.06
Rhymney	1,127.72	1,315.66	1,503.62	1,691.57	2,067.48	2,443.38	2,819.29	3,383.14	3,946.99
Risca East	1,126.36	1,314.07	1,501.81	1,689.53	2,064.99	2,440.43	2,815.89	3,379.06	3,942.23
Risca West	1,137.69	1,327.30	1,516.92	1,706.53	2,085.76	2,464.99	2,844.22	3,413.06	3,981.90
Van	1,129.45	1,317.67	1,505.92	1,694.16	2,070.65	2,447.12	2,823.61	3,388.32	3,953.03
Remainder	1,118.36	1,304.74	1,491.14	1,677.53	2,050.32	2,423.10	2,795.89	3,355.06	3,914.23

The meeting closed at 7.52 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2023 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR