

## **Subject Overview and Scrutiny comments and recommendations on Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 to 2022-23**

### **1 Social Services and Wellbeing**

- 1.1 Following the Committee's consideration of the draft budget proposals for the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate, Members determined to make the following comments and recommendations
- 1.2 **Members recommended that a report on the MTFS proposals be brought back to the Committee once the final budget settlement from Welsh Government is announced. Members were in agreement that due to the settlement figure not yet being finalised, the figures in the report would not be accurate and therefore needed to be re-worked before members could consider them.**
- 1.3 **Members recommended that once the settlement was known and the figures had been re-worked by finance colleagues that members are presented with the budget as a whole for each directorate so Members could determine the full expenditure in each directorate and not just the areas where reductions had been proposed.**

### **Further Information**

- 1.4 The Committee asked how sustainable the delivery of the supply of Social Housing was given the base level budget was proposed to decrease from £5.8 million to £1.6 million
- 1.5 Members asked to receive information on the savings achieved for complex care in the Western Bay Partnership, specifically for Bridgend.

### **2 Communities**

- 2.1 Following the Committee's consideration of the draft budget proposals for the Communities Directorate, Members determined to make the following comments and recommendations:
- 2.2 The Committee voiced their disappointment with the disparity of cuts across the Directorate and how the Communities Directorate were looking at 8% cut to their budget whilst others - when including Growth - are only facing 1.8% cut.
- 2.3 In relation to COM14a, Members raised concerns regarding the impact of the budget reduction proposals to the cleaning services and the probability that the service will work on a reactive basis only. Therefore Members welcome the Directorates statement that any excess Council owned equipment would be provided to Town and Community Councils on a case by case basis to carry out cleaning services to counteract the probable litter on the roadside.

- 2.4 **The Committee commented that visible services should be protected from budget reductions, in particular cleaning services. Members therefore recommend that if the Council should receive any additional funds from Welsh Government that consideration should be given to retaining monies to offset COM41 and COM41a.**
- 2.5 **During their discussions regarding COM42 and COM42a, the Committee recommend that communication is distributed to Town and Community Councils and the voluntary sector to inform them of the proposed budget reductions. The Committee was pleased to hear that the Council is streamlining the process for Community Asset Transfer to assist with a more effective process for all parties.**
- 2.6 **The Committee recommend that prior to the public Budget Consultation being finalised next year that Budget Research and Evaluation Panel receive the proposed questions in the consultation to ensure there are some direct questions regarding the proposed budget reductions as opposed to more generic questions that could be misinterpreted.**

### **3 Education & Family Support**

- 3.1 Following the Committee's consideration of the draft budget proposals for the Education & Family Support Directorate, Members determined to make the following comments and recommendations:
- 3.2 In relation to EFS33, Members raised concerns with the possible removal of supervisors on primary school bus services with fewer than 8 pupils and highlighted that the removal would leave children vulnerable and cause driver distraction. The Committee concluded that the risk of children being damaged mentally or physically was too high for a potential £35,000 saving.
- 3.3 The Committee expressed some concern with budget reduction proposal EFS41 – the removal of post 16 transport, as the reduction would impact the most deprived areas within the Borough who may not continue their education without the supplied transport. Members also highlighted the negative effect the proposal would in turn have on probable increase of young people not engaged in education, employment or training. The Committee concluded that the cuts to education should be considered alongside the reduction to bus subsidies.
- 3.4 During discussions regarding the efficiency savings against School Delegated Budget - SCH1 – the Committee highlighted the need for governors to vigorously challenge head teachers on their budgets and explore all possibilities for income generation in a bid to offset the possible 1% budget cut.
- 3.5 **The Committee commented on the potential financial impact the proposed efficiency saving against the school budgets would have on schools that were already in deficit and the increased difficulty it would impose on recovering from that position within the statutory timeframe.**

**Members therefore recommend that if the Council should receive any additional funds from Welsh Government that consideration should be given to retaining monies to offset SCH01.**

#### **4 Chief Executive**

4.1 Following the Committee's consideration of the draft budget proposals for the Chief Executive Directorate, Members determined to make the following comments and recommendations:

4.2 **The Committee discussed the Members Community Action Fund and whilst Members agree with the principle of the project, they cannot support the funding to continue and therefore recommend that the Directorate continue with the removal of the Members' Community Action Fund.**

#### **5 Corporate Overview**

5.1 Members highlighted the need for the Council to undertake increased corporate vigilance which in turn could generate income. The Committee provided the following proposals:

5.2 **As outlined in Budget Research and Evaluation Panel the Committee recommend that Bridgend Council should introduce fees and charges to align with other Councils; explore the possibility of charging companies and members of the public when they have damaged Council property; explore joint funding with the Police for operating the CCTV service.**

5.3 **In addition to the aforementioned comments, the Committee recommend that the Council explore the possibility of introducing fines for members of the public that damage public property and do not adhere to the highway code by making full use of CCTV already in place in Bridgend and the BCBC owned camera car used to deter dangerous parking around schools in the Borough.**