

CABINET - TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

JC Spanswick
HM Williams

N Farr
JPD Blundell

W R Goode

J Gebbie

Apologies for Absence

Janine Nightingale - Corporate Director – Communities

Officers:

Oscar Roberts
Carys Lord
Claire Marchant
Kelly Watson
Mark Shephard
Michael Pitman
Zak Shell
Alex Rawlin

Business Administrative Apprentice - Democratic Services
Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Chief Executive
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Head of Operations – Community Services
Corporate Policy & Performance Manager

Declarations of Interest

None

296. Outcome of the Consultation 'Shaping Bridgend's Future' 2024

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change presented a report which informed Cabinet of the outcome of the 'Shaping Bridgend's Future' 2024 budget consultation which asked citizens their views on what they consider should be the priority areas for allocating the budget for the forthcoming financial year, and to examine those views against funding provided by the Welsh Government.</p> <p>She explained that the consultation received 2,839 interactions from a combination of survey completions following attendance at engagement events (face-to-face drop-in sessions), social media engagement and via the Council's Citizens' Panel.</p> <p>The full consultation report was provided at Appendix A to the report.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal commented on the point made on keeping Council tax at a minimum. While this was shared amongst all Members, there was a risk to service delivery if the Council tax was not set at a level that helped balance the budget.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment commented on the point made on the services that the public are willing to cut, one being the Net Zero agenda. Whilst he supported the views of the public, he asked that the public bear in mind that we also had a duty to become Net Zero by 2030. He added that going forward, we needed to ensure that we were engaging with the public further</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning & Regeneration added that it was important to engage with schools as many younger people will not necessarily be paying Council tax yet, but will be able to vote in upcoming elections.</p> <p>Cabinet Members discussed the need for us to continue to do better with regards to engagement and ensuring that the public have their say, particularly during the budget setting processes.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet noted the outcome of the consultation as detailed in the attached consultation report.</p>
Date Decision Made	20 February 2024

297. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024-25 to 2027-28

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change presented a report which presented Cabinet with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28, attached at Annex 3 (along with associated appendices), which includes a financial forecast for 2024-28, a detailed revenue budget for 2024-25 and a Capital Programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34, and to recommend that these are presented to Council for approval on 28 February 2024.</p> <p>She explained that the Council is required to approve a balanced budget for the following financial year and set the council tax rates for the County Borough. This report sets out proposals to achieve that objective and contribute towards a sustainable financial position going into the medium-term.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that the financial settlement for Local Governments in Wales was not due to be announced until the end of February, and therefore this budget was proposed based on the provisional settlement which was received in December 2023. Any changes will be reported to Council in due course, however this will not affect the Council tax proposal.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal stated that upon receiving the draft MTFS document, it was noted that there was headroom of around £4million. This was presented to the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) and the subsequent Scrutiny committees and sought their input on how to move forward. The budget setting process had been the most difficult that it has ever been, and unfortunately cuts have needed to be made to ensure the balance of the budget and minimizing risk to service delivery and council tax prices.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning & Regeneration highlighted that for many years BCBC have tried to ensure that the public are sheltered from the brunt of cuts and this had been evident in the council tax increases of previous years. He explained that last year the council tax was raised by a value lower than inflation and the year before that, the council tax was frozen for the year. Unfortunately, this was not possible any further while the budget cuts had to be made.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet recommended the MTFS 2024-25 to 2027-28, including the 2024- 25 revenue budget and the Capital Programme 2023-24 to 2033-34, to Council for approval. In particular, Cabinet approved the points set out in section 9.1 of the report.</p>
Date Decision Made	20 February 2024

298. Capital Strategy 2024-25

<p>Decision Made</p>	<p>The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change presented a report on the Capital Strategy 2024-25 to 2033-34 (Appendix A), which includes the Prudential Indicators against which the Council measures itself during the financial year and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024-25 (Section 7 of Appendix A), before submitting to Council for approval.</p> <p>She explained that Strategy emphasizes the pressures currently being faced by the Council. Pressures on the Capital Programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased prices of materials, as a result of the higher inflation rates currently in the UK and further afield, as well as additional costs associated with Brexit;• Supply chain difficulties leading to higher prices and delays in scheme being completed;• Recruitment challenges, both within the Council and in companies we contract with, resulting in higher wages and overall contract costs;• Additional requirements on schemes to achieve Welsh Government's Net Zero commitment, which includes an aim of collectively achieving net zero across the Welsh public sector, which will lead to changes in the way assets are designed and managed, which will likely result in increased costs. <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal asked if any further recommendations came from the scrutiny meetings. The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that a suggest was made that BREP had sight of the Capital Strategy at an early stage to be able to feed into it going forward.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal made reference to the point under Principle 4 - ensuring that there is effective pre- and-post project appraisal including a "lessons learned" exercise. He asked that this be made available for inspection once it was carried out.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment made reference to the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) in the report. He asked that a report be bought to Cabinet that clearly set out the finances needed to keep our highways safe and useable for all. We have a statutory duty to do this and therefore we need to be clear on how we will do so.</p>
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	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that Cabinet considered the report and recommended that the Capital Strategy 2024-25 to 2033-34, including the Prudential Indicators 2024-25 to 2033-34 and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2024-25 at Appendix A be presented to Council for approval.</p>
Date Decision Made	20 February 2024

299. Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change presented a report on the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) 2024-25, which includes the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Borrowing Strategy 2024-25• Treasury Investment Strategy 2024-25• Treasury Management Indicators for the period 2024-25 to 2026-27. <p>The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change highlighted key areas withing Appendix 1, namely the Council's external debt and investment position as at 30 September 2023, The Council's balance sheet summary and forecast and the major objectors for the Council to follow during the 2024-25 financial year.</p> <p>Cabinet Members asked questions in relation to borrowing and investments which were answered in detail by the Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning & Regeneration asked what assurances are there that investments are made within good practices. The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change the Council confirmed that the Council needed to consider the Environmental, Social and Governance implications of decisions to invest, and these were set out in the CIPFA Code.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considered the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024-25; and• Recommended that the Treasury Management Strategy be presented to Council for approval on 28 February 2024.
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Date Decision Made	20 February 2024
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300. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	20 February 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 17:15