

Minutes of the Meeting of LEARNING COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held at the Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video conference on Thursday, 9 February 2023

PRESENT; Councillors Endaf Edwards, Chris James, Euros Davies, Marc Davies, Meirion Davies, Rhodri Davies, Amanda Edwards, Eryl Evans, Elizabeth Evans, Gareth Lloyd, Ann Bowen Morgan

Also in attendance: Councillors Bryan Davies, Catrin M S Davies, Gareth Davies, Keith Evans, Wyn Evans, Keith Henson, Ceris Jones, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux and Alun Williams

Officers in attendance: Lowri Edwards, Duncan Hall, Elin Pryor, Meinir Ebbsworth, Elen James, Eifion Evans, Barry Rees, James Starbuck, and Lisa Evans.

(1.30 pm - 3.30 pm)

1 Apologies

Councillor Paul Hinge apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)

Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

None

3 Report on the draft Budget for 2023/24

The Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members met to consider the Service budget for those service areas that are within the Committee's remit and to consider the following recommendations:

1. To consider the overall Budget position as shown in the Budget report in Enclosure A.
2. To consider the relevant elements of the Budget Cost pressures, totaling £22.2m across all Services.
3. To consider the relevant elements of the Budget Savings proposals, totaling £8.9m across all Services.
4. To consider the relevant elements of the Fees & charges proposals.
5. To consider the 4 options outlined in Recommendation 3a) to d) of the 24/01/23 Cabinet report, namely:
 - 3a) A 6.3% Council Tax increase (including 1.3% in relation to the proposed Fire Authority Levy increase) and a 23/24 Budget requirement of £179.627m, which would provide a lower contribution towards Delegated Schools Budget Cost Pressures.

- 3b) A 7.3% Council Tax increase (including 1.3% in relation to the proposed Fire Authority Levy increase) and a 23/24 Budget requirement of £180.101m.
- 3c) A 8.3% Council Tax increase (including 1.3% in relation to the proposed Fire Authority Levy increase) and a 23/24 Budget requirement of £180.576m, to provide a higher contribution towards Delegated Schools Budget Cost Pressures.
- 3d) An alternative option over and above Recommendations 3a) to 3c) to provide a specific increase for a specific purpose, provided that any option is considered during the Budget Scrutiny meetings and that the Section 151 officer is given sufficient time in advance to fully model the impact and to provide an opinion on its robustness.
- 6. To provide any other appropriate feedback on the Draft 23/24 Budget to Cabinet.

The Committee received presentations from the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bryan Davies), the Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement (Councillor Gareth Davies) and the Corporate Lead Officer: Finance & Procurement (Duncan Hall). The relevant Cabinet Member then presented the Budget items relevant to their Service Area. Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions, which were answered in turn by Cabinet Members and/or Senior Officers.

Recommendations:

The Committee agreed that:

- 1. It had considered the overall Budget position as shown in the Budget report in Enclosure A.
- 2. It had considered the relevant elements of the Budget Cost pressures falling under this Scrutiny Committee.
- 3. It had considered the relevant elements of the Budget Savings proposals falling under this Scrutiny Committee.
- 4. It had considered the relevant elements of the Fees & Charges proposals falling under this Scrutiny Committee.
- 5. The majority of Committee Members voted in favour of a 7.3% increase for Council Tax levels. The Committee is therefore recommending an increase of 7.3% in Council Tax for 2023/2024, which is option 3b) of the recommendations, as follows:
3b) A 7.3% Council Tax increase (including 1.3% in relation to the proposed Fire Authority Levy increase) and a 23/24 Budget requirement of £180.101m).
- 6. It was agreed to recommend to Cabinet that if further money becomes available from Welsh Government that does not have specific terms attached to it that it is ringfenced for schools.

4 To confirm the Minutes of the previous Meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes

It was AGREED to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 8 December 2022.

Matters arising

None.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Learning Communities Overview and
Scrutiny Committee held on 30 March 2023**

Chairman:_____

Date:_____