

Minutes of the Meeting of LEARNING COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video conference on Thursday, 8 February 2024

PRESENT; Councillor Endaf Edwards (Chair), Councillors Chris James, Euros Davies, Marc Davies, Meirion Davies, Rhodri Davies, Amanda Edwards, Eryl Evans, Paul Hinge, Gareth Lloyd Mark Strong and Ann Bowen Morgan

Also in attendance: Councillors Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation.

Councillor Gareth Davies, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement Services. Councillor Catrin M S Davies, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Customer Services.

Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills Councillors Alun Williams, Keith Henson, Matthew Vaux, Clive Davies. (Cabinet Members).

Councillors Caryl Roberts, Rhodri Evans, Ceris Jones, Keith Evans, Hugh Hughes, Gwyn Wigley Evans.

Officers in attendance: Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Barry Rees, Corporate Director; James Starbuck, Corporate Director, Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer, Finance and Procurement, Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer Democratic Services, Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer and Monitoring Officer, Elen James, Corporate Lead Officer, Clive Williams, Corporate Lead Officer, Kirsty Dawson, Corporate Manager, Carys Fowles, Assistant Accountants, Lisa Evans, Scrutiny and Standards Officer

(1.30 - 4.15 pm)

1 Welcome and Apologies

None

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.

Members declared a personal but not prejudicial interest as school governors appointed by the Council.

3 Report on the draft 24/25 Budget

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bryan Davies, presented the report on the draft budget for 2024/2025 (Enclosure A). The Leader stated that this was

an extraordinarily difficult financial situation faced by the Council with considerable financial pressures.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement, Councillor Gareth Davies, presented the remaining information in Enclosure A of the report. Councillor Davies also stated that this is by far the worst financial situation he has faced as Councillor in setting the budget.

Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer, Finance and Procurement, then provided a brief verbal update on the latest Budget situation.

Cabinet Members then in turn provided detailed information regarding Enclosures B and C and the specific saving proposals shown in Enclosure D, as follows:

D1 - Schools and Lifelong Learning Services

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills;

Councillor Catrin M S Davies, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Customer Services

Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £1.539m from Delegated Schools Budget

£696k from the retained Schools & Lifelong Learning Services budget

Current Budget: £56.8m (including £47.5m Delegated to Schools)

Members then considered Enclosure E, Fees and Charges relating to the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, pages 15-16 of the agenda papers.

Members then considered Enclosure F and Enclosure G.

Following discussion, Committee Members were asked to consider the following recommendations.

Recommendation(s):

For the respective Services that are within the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. To consider:

- a) the overall draft 24/25 Budget position.
- b) the relevant elements of the Revenue Budget Movements.
- c) the relevant elements of the Revenue Budget Cost Pressures.
- d) the relevant elements of the Revenue Budget Reductions Proposals.
- e) the relevant elements of the Fees & Charges proposals.
- f) Cabinet's proposal on Council Tax Premiums.
- g) the relevant elements of the Multi-year Capital Programme.

2. To make recommendation(s) for Cabinet to consider on 20/02/24, as the

Committee deems appropriate, in relation to the Budget.

Reasons for recommendations:

To assist with the preparation of a balanced budget, to ensure appropriate scrutiny of the overall Budget being proposed and to make recommendation(s), as appropriate, for Cabinet to consider at their next meeting on 20/02/24.

Following discussion, Committee Members AGREED that they had considered the above-mentioned recommendations and AGREED that future identified saving proposals for 2025/26 onwards would be placed on the scrutiny forward programme when appropriate.

4 To confirm 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 previous meeting of the committee.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 May 2024

Chairman: _____

Date: _____