

Minutes of the Meeting of CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video conference on Thursday, 16 May 2024

PRESENT; Councillor Elaine Evans (Chair) Councillors Euros Davies, Ifan Davies, Endaf Edwards, Eryl Evans, Raymond Evans, Paul Hinge, Hugh Hughes, Ann Bowen Morgan

Also in attendance: Councillor Gareth Davies and Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Members) & Gareth Lloyd

Officers in attendance: Mr Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer – Finance & Procurement, Mr Alun Williams, Corporate Lead Officer – Policy & Performance, Mrs Ann Ireland, Corporate Manager – Revenues, Benefits and Financial Assessments, Mr Justin Davies, Corporate Manager- Core Finance, Mrs Diana Davies, Corporate Manager - Partnership & Performance, Ms Cathryn Morgan, Equalities and Inclusion Manager, Mrs Dwynwen Jones, Scrutiny Support Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic and Standards Officer

(10:00am- 12:20pm)

1 Welcome and Apologies

Councillor Rhodri Evans and Caryl Roberts apologised for their 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 Performance Report on Welfare Reform

An update was provided by the Welfare Reform, Corporate Manager – Revenues, Benefits and Financial Assessments on the following:-

- Background
- Current staffing and caseload position
- Universal Credit (UC)
- Spare Room Subsidy (Bedroom Tax)
- The Benefit Cap
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)
- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

- Future
- Welsh Government Consultations

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the content of the report.

The number of case loads in other Local Authorities were also requested to make a comparison with the workload in Ceredigion.

4 Ceredigion Community Grant Scheme

Consideration was given to the Ceredigion Community Grant Scheme report.

The

Corporate Lead Officer – Finance & Procurement reported that Ceredigion Community Grants Scheme currently allows Community Groups, Community Councils or bonafide Voluntary Sports and Play Associations to apply for funding from the Council for projects that have the aim of increasing the range of facilities, activities, and opportunities within Ceredigion.

During the 2024/25 Budget Setting process it was agreed that the Council's Community Grant Scheme budget was reduced. Capital Grants budget would be reduced to £100k. The Council's contribution to Revenue Grants of £26k was removed, which therefore reduces the available funding to £30k p.a. which was entirely funded from Ceredigion's share of The Welsh Church Fund (WCF). It was essential that the limited funding now available was used to maximum effect, this includes taking a Ceredigion wide high-level view of which aspects were important to support.

Included in the Revenue Grants Budget are 'Policy' grants which were awarded to Papur Bro, Eisteddfodau, Agricultural Shows, Festivals and individuals representing Wales or Great Britain.

The report presented to the Committee outlined the proposed changes to enable the Scheme spend to keep within budget.

Following discussion and questions from the floor, it was AGREED to recommend to Cabinet to:-

- (i) INCLUDE Town & Community Councils from the updated Scheme
- (ii) fund Applications for Places of Worship only from the Welsh Church Fund;
- (iii) reduce the maximum Capital award level to £10,000;
- (iv) amend the range of Policy grants support as per Table 3 of the report;
- (v) no longer offer any other revenue grants; and
- (vi) streamline the grant application window and process.

5 Oversight of in year Financial matters

The Corporate Lead Officer – Finance & Procurement reported that the 24/25 Budget setting process was a challenging one which included c 70

Budget Reduction proposals being approved totalling c£5.8m. Progress in delivering these Budget Reduction was reviewed and monitored by Leadership Group at the end of every month.

He stated that during the year, it was intended to provide individual Overview & Scrutiny Committees with the following information:

- The latest quarterly financial position as reported to Cabinet, starting with Quarter 1 in due course. This would include the Revenue and Capital Monitoring reports.
- The latest BRAG status position in relation to the 24/25 Budget Reductions was reported as appendix 1

The information presented enabled the Committee to scrutinise the financial matters pertinent to the areas of Service falling within its remit. At any point during the year, the Committee could choose to explore any area of the Budget within its remit via the Forward Work programme.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the report presented.

6 Engagement and Participation Policy Annual Report 2023-2024

The Corporate Lead Officer – Finance & Procurement reported that the 24/25 Budget setting process was a challenging one which included c 70 Budget Reduction proposals being approved totalling c£5.8m. Progress in delivering these Budget Reduction was reviewed and monitored by Leadership Group at the end of every month.

He stated that during the year, it was intended to provide individual Overview & Scrutiny Committees with the following information:

- The latest quarterly financial position as reported to Cabinet, starting with Quarter 1 in due course. This would include the Revenue and Capital Monitoring reports.
- The latest BRAG status position in relation to the 24/25 Budget Reductions was reported as appendix 1

The information presented enabled the Committee to scrutinise the financial matters pertinent to the areas of Service falling within its remit. At any point during the year, the Committee could choose to explore any area of the Budget within its remit via the Forward Work programme.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the report presented.

7 Forward Work Programme

It was AGREED to note the Forward Work Programme as presented subject to an update report on the position in relation to the Council assets that had placed on sale and sold etc.

8 To confirm minutes of the previous meetings 12th March 2024 and 21st March 2024 and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes.
It was RESOLVED to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the previous meeting.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 July 2024

Chairman: _____

Date: _____