



SPECIAL COUNCIL – 26TH FEBRUARY 2014

SUBJECT: BUDGET PROPOSALS 2014/15 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/2017

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek Council approval for the budget proposals contained within this report.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Published on 11th December 2013, the key points of the Final Local Government Settlement for Wales are:-

- There have been two transfers into the settlement totalling £7.636m, details of which are provided in Table 2.
- The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for Caerphilly CBC for the 2014/15 financial year is a reduction of 2.91% after adjusting for new responsibilities i.e. a RSG **decrease of £8.130m** (including Outcome Agreement).
- The capital allocations available to Caerphilly in the RSG and from the General Capital Grant have increased by £22k from the previous year.

2.2 The proposals contained within this report deliver (excluding external grant funding) a balanced budget for 2014/15 on the basis that Council Tax is increased by 3.9%. Table 1 below provides a summary:-

Table 1 – Summary

Paragraph	Description	£m	£m
5.2.1	Whole Authority Cost Pressures	5.695	
5.3.1	Inescapable Service Pressures	3.108	
5.4.1	Reduction in WG RSG Funding	8.130	
5.7.5	Savings Achieved in Advance		0.122
5.7.5	Savings Proposals 2014/15 (including Council Tax Surplus 2013/14)		14.598
6.1	Revenue Contribution to capital	0.186	
5.8.3	Council Tax Uplift (3.90%)		2.399
	TOTAL	17.119	17.119

- 2.3 Table 2 provides details of funding that is transferred into the RSG as part of the 2014/15 financial settlement:-

Table 2 – Transfers in 2014/15

	£m
Council Tax Reduction Scheme Administration Subsidy	0.328
Private Finance Initiative Grant	7.308
TOTAL	7.636

- 2.4 Table 3 provides details of other passported grants included in the WG financial settlement:-

Table 3 – Other Passported Grants 2014/15

	£m
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) (10% shortfall)	1.231
Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) - Highways	0.194
Council Tax Pensioners Grant	0.246
First Steps Improvement Package	0.171
Other	(0.146)
TOTAL	1.696

- 2.5 Passported grants have historically been allocated to the relevant service area. For the Council Tax Pensioners Grant, Members will need to agree a scheme for distributing the funding. During the 2013/14 financial year the Welsh Government prescribed a national scheme to enable local authorities to use the funding to further help those pensioners who were already receiving some (i.e. less than 100%) Council Tax reduction (formerly Council Tax benefit) to reduce the amount of Council Tax they had to pay, by between £5 and £100, depending upon how much their bill was after the Council Tax reduction amount and any discount or exemption awards had been deducted.
- 2.6 For the 2014/15 financial year it will be for each Local Authority in Wales to decide whether to use this funding to operate the same scheme or a different scheme. Alternatively, do nothing from the 1st April 2014 to help pensioners with their Council Tax bills but spend the money on something else.
- 2.7 Given the fact that there is not enough time before the required implementation date (1st April 2014) to carry out a full consultation on any alternative schemes, it seems reasonable to recommend that the Authority administers a scheme for 2014/15 that is in accordance with the details laid down by WG for 2013/14. This will remove the need for further consultation at this time; however, any future review would have to include a full consultation to consider all options for 2015/2016, with a report to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee in the first instance during the Summer 2014.
- 2.8 The net 2014/15 revenue budget for the Council (including transfers in) if approved, would be £332,032m (as shown in Appendix 1).

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Budget decisions impact on all Council Strategies. This report relates, primarily, to the efficient and effective use of the Council's revenue and capital resources.

4. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK – MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

- 4.1 It is clear from the financial settlement that Local Government in Wales faces a period of severe austerity.

- 4.2 Following the announcement of the WG final settlement a report was presented to Cabinet on 19 December 2013, which included details of the savings target to be achieved by 31 March 2017, totalling £28.044m as shown in Appendix 2a. This is based on WG's indicative further cut of 1.34% in the RSG for 2015/16. In the absence of indicative figures from WG for 2016/17 a further reduction of 1.34% has been assumed. A summary of the savings requirement is provided in Table 4 below: -

Table 4 – Cash Savings Targets

Year	Annual Cash Savings Target £m	Cumulative Cash Savings Target £m
2014/15	14.640	14.640
2015/16	6.462	21.102
2016/17	6.942	28.044

- 4.3 Members should note that the risk of a cut above the assumed level of 1.34% for 2015/16 and 2016/17 remains and for each additional 0.5% reduction in the RSG, further savings of £1.4m would need to be found.
- 4.4 As in previous years, WG have, through the RSG formula, placed a requirement on Local Authorities to include provision of a 1% protection above the percentage applied by Central Government to WG's block grant each year for the next 3 years for Schools. For 2014/15 Local Authorities have been allowed by WG to use the Pupil Deprivation Grant increases to reduce this commitment from £935k to £505k. This is summarised in Appendix 2b.

5. 2014/15 BUDGET PROPOSALS

- 5.1 This section of the report sets out the detailed budget proposals for consideration for the 2014/15 financial year.

5.2 Whole Authority Cost Pressures (£5.695 m)

- 5.2.1 The whole Authority cost pressures totalling £5.695m are set out in Table 5 below: -

Table 5 – Whole Authority Cost Pressures

	£m
• Pay excluding Teachers and other School staff @ 1% (Pay awards for Schools are provided within the cash pledge)	1.113
• Living wage at £7.65 per hour (increase assumed at 20 p per annum - excludes Schools)	0.164
• Non pay inflation 1.5% (net of 1.5% fess & charges increases)	1.466
• WHQS – Capital Charges	0.792
• Supported Borrowing (Capital Financing)	0.270
• Local Government Borrowing Initiative - Highways	0.194
• Other Passported Grants to be supported by the Council	1.696
	5.695

- 5.2.2 As in 2013 the backdated arrears in respect of Living Wage to 1st November 2013 totalling circa £50k can be met from General Fund balances, if agreed by Council. Members are advised that in 2012/13 service areas were able to absorb these arrears. This is likely to be the case in 2013/14, but it is prudent to set a sum aside.

5.3 Service Commitments/Service Pressures (£3.108m)

- 5.3.1 The Council continues to manage within its means and is again projected to deliver a balanced budget overall for this current financial year to 31 March 2014, as reported to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2014. It is incumbent upon Council to set a realistic budget each year. Table 6 provides details of those inescapable service commitments/pressures that have been identified and require consideration in respect of funding.

Table 6 – Inescapable Service Pressures and Other Service Commitments

	£m
CTRS additional liability	0.533
Annual Landfill Tax increases	0.240
Meeting the Schools Pledge (see Appendix 2a)	0.935
Social Services Demographics	1.000
Welfare Reform – implementation costs	0.100
Other Service Pressures	0.300
TOTAL	3.108

5.4 Welsh Government (WG) Funding (£8.130m Reduction)

- 5.4.1 The WG RSG Settlement decreased the available funding by 2.91% for the 2014/15 financial year, which reduced the amount available for Caerphilly CBC by £8.130m in cash terms.

5.5 Outcome Agreement (£1.905m)

- 5.5.1 The allocation of the Outcome Agreement of £1.905m continues to support key services that help the Council deliver its key strategic priorities.

5.6 Events

- 5.6.1 During the course of the budget preparations the Council has again been approached by the external organisers of a number of prestigious events including the Proms in the Park and the Tour of Britain. We have always endeavoured to be supportive wherever possible and have funded a number of these events from a combination of balances and service underspends. However, because these requests have only ever been on a year-by-year basis (and sometimes after the Council budget has been set) then we have never made formal budget provision for the costs. Experience over recent years has now provided quite accurate costs for these events and it is now clear that they are significant e.g. circa £79k for Proms in the Park and £51k for the Tour of Britain.
- 5.6.2 If Members are minded to support these events in future then it is imperative that formal budgets are established and this will have to be at the expense of other service provision e.g. further service reductions/cuts in addition to those identified in this report.
- 5.6.3 In recognition of the budget difficulties, Council officers have recently gone back to the organisers to see whether there is any possibility of the events being run in the County Borough at zero cost for the Council Tax payer (or with significantly reduced costs). However, as these requests have only recently been made we are awaiting formal responses. Members will be verbally updated at the Council meeting as to the current position.
- 5.6.4 The agreed budget strategy has been prepared on the basis of no service growth other than in exceptional circumstances. Unless Members determine that additional budget is to be made available then regrettably these events will not be supported in 2014/15. The existing events budget (for local Council organised events such as Caerphilly Big Cheese) remains in the budget for 2014/15 but will, alongside all discretionary services, be subject to review and scrutiny for future years.

5.7 2014/15 Savings Requirement

- 5.7.1 Since the Local Government (LG) Provisional Settlement announcement in October 2013, a significant amount of work has been undertaken within each Directorate to identify further savings than originally anticipated for 2014/15 to 2016/17. There were plans in place to cope with the lower savings target anticipated in both February 2013 and June 2013, but the LG Settlement is now requiring an additional £7m of savings for 2014/15. Furthermore, there is currently no indication of the period of austerity coming to an end after 2016/17.
- 5.7.2 The work to identify savings has been led by the Corporate Management Team (in consultation with appropriate Cabinet Members), working with Heads of Service with support from colleagues in Finance. Service Managers have also been involved to ensure that all options are identified for consideration by Members.
- 5.7.3 A "Draft Long List" of potential savings was considered, in summary, at a MTFP Seminar held on 21 November 2013. This has been followed by a series of Special Scrutiny Committee Meetings held in December 2013 and January 2014. In addition, Trade Unions have been consulted and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) savings proposals have been presented to the Caerphilly Housing Task Group (CHTG) as part of the consultation process. Community and Town Councils have also been consulted and a public consultation in respect of savings proposals concluded on 20 December 2013.
- 5.7.4 The Corporate Management Team had, in the light of the extensive work undertaken and the feedback from the consultation process undertaken so far, identified a shortlist of individual proposals for 2014/15 as set out in Appendices 3a to 3f. These proposals were presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 19 December 2013 and are summarised in Table 7: -

Table 7 – Summary of Proposed 2014/15 Savings

	£m
Savings in advance	
Brought forward from 2013/14	0.122
Insurance Fund	0.400
Sub Total	0.522
2014/15 Savings Proposals	
Whole Authority "corporate nature"	4.944
Corporate Services	2.259
HRA	1.338
Social Services	2.139
Environment	2.944
Education (excluding Schools) and LLL	1.202
Sub Total	14.826
TOTAL SAVINGS	15.348

- 5.7.5 The ongoing consultation process has resulted in some of the proposed savings presented to Cabinet on 19th December 2013 being withdrawn at the request of Members. Details of these are provided in Appendix 4. This reduces the total savings to £14.720m. Members will note that savings of £125k have been reinstated in relation to Other Service Pressures. This will be required to meet further anticipated budget pressures, particularly in relation to Welfare Reform.
- 5.7.6 The consequence of the removal of these savings for 2014/15 leaves a funding gap of £628k, which will be covered by a proposed increase in Council Tax for 2014/15.

5.8 Council Tax Implications 2014/15

- 5.8.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 27 February 2013 included indicative increases to Council Tax for 2014/15 and 2015/16 of 2.35%.
- 5.8.2 Given that the financial modelling identifies to date the need to continue to provide additional funding going forward, an uplift in Council Tax of 2.35% for the next 3 financial years, should be reviewed by Members.
- 5.8.3 Accordingly, it is proposed that the Council Tax level for 2014/15 be increased by 3.9% i.e. Council Tax Band D be set at £954.78 per annum (an increase of 69p per week) to deliver a balanced budget after the removal of proposed savings for 2014/15 as detailed in Appendix 4.

6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 TO 2016/17

- 6.1 The proposed Capital Programme for the period 2014 to 2017 is detailed in Appendix 5 of this report and is summarised in Table 8: -

Table 8 – Summary Capital Programme Funding 2014/2017

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Capital Programme Proposals	13,462	12,028	8,466
WG Funding Available	8,009	8,009	8,009
Capital Funding Gap	(5,453)	(4,019)	(457)
Funded By: -			
Surplus (Deficit) c/fwd	1,099	1,624	457
Bargoed Cinema Insurance fund	300		
* Prudential Borrowing Cinema	2,000	2,000	
LGBI – Highways	2,800		
Capital Earmarked Reserve – Cinema		800	
Senior Pay Revenue Contribution to Capital	112	52	
Additional Revenue Contribution to Capital	22		
Capital Receipts 2013/14	590		
Delay in borrowing due to cash reserves	154		
Total Additional Funding	7,077	4,476	457
Surplus (Deficit) carried forward	1,624	457	0

** In accordance with a previous decision by Council, this prudential borrowing will be funded by the annual lease rental income from the Odeon Cinema Group.*

7. GENERAL FUND BALANCES

- 7.1 Details of the projected movement on General Fund balances are provided in Appendix 6.
- 7.2 There are no known further allocations to General Fund at this time over and above those identified.
- 7.3 Going forward, there is limited scope for any significant additional surpluses or receipts available to replenish the Fund. This is down to growing service pressures in key areas, the need to meet government initiatives (such as welfare reform), ongoing reductions in RSG funding and an ever reducing Capital Programme.

- 7.4 As in the previous report to Council in respect of the Budget for 2013/14, there is a growing pressure on the Local Government Pension Scheme. A pension deficit of circa £500k is anticipated for 2013/14 and this will need to be funded from the General Fund. It is expected that the conclusion of the triennial valuation in respect of the Pension Fund will address this issue moving forward. A further report will be presented to Members when the valuation process has been completed.
- 7.5 Provision has been made to fund the cost of the Living Wage increase for the period 1st November 2013 to 31st March 2014, if required.
- 7.6 Further to the report presented to Council on 20th January 2014 in respect of the interim arrangements for the role of Chief Executive Officer, it is proposed to set aside a further provision of £358k to cover the full financial year costs for 2014/15 of the 2 Senior Officers who are currently suspended. This provision will be reviewed when more information becomes available.
- 7.7 Members will be aware that the Authority has sold its outstanding claim against the failed Icelandic Bank, Landsbanki following an auction process on 30 January 2014. The original investment was £5m and the total cash recovered including the auction proceeds is £4.62m (which includes partial recovery of the original investment and interest due). Members should note that this now concludes the recovery action against Landsbanki. In light of the sale of the outstanding claim the impairment provision has been reviewed resulting in a transfer to General Fund balances of £1.262m.
- 7.8 Funds have been set aside estimated at £800k in respect of some savings proposals for 2014/15, which are likely to be delivered after April 2014 but before March 2015. Funds will be released to service areas on a case-by-case basis following a review of need.
- 7.9 As in previous years, it has been agreed that a balance of £10m in respect of the General Fund is a prudent level for an Authority as large as Caerphilly CBC. Based on current projected levels there is scope to use £2.499m of General Fund balances for one-off capital expenditure as cost avoidance or Invest to Save schemes. Bids for this funding will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to separate reports to Cabinet at a later date.

8. BUDGET STRATEGY FOR 2015/16 AND 2016/17

- 8.1 For 2015/16 and 2016/17, it has become apparent from the work undertaken to date that there is a need for a different approach. This conclusion has been reached after taking into account the following: -
- (i) After consecutive years of efficiency savings or doing more or the same for less, there is only so far that this approach can be taken. Efficiency savings should still be pursued but it is not realistic to expect anything more than 3% can be delivered during 2015/16 and 2016/17.
 - (ii) Increasing fees and charges is another approach that once reviewed and exhausted is unlikely to deliver more than small inflationary increases that service users can tolerate.
 - (iii) Council Tax increases should be reviewed and will assist in respect of the shortfall for future years.
- 8.2 Hence, it is proposed that the Budget Strategy to be taken forward for 2015/16 and 2016/17 considers savings proposals via two main strands as follows: -
- (i) Further proposals for Members to consider in respect of up to 3% efficiency savings.

These efficiency savings targets to be applied to those statutory and essential services that the Authority has to deliver, either directly or via a third party organisation. These savings will be expected to have a limited impact on the public with either marginal reductions in service levels or doing the same for less. Reports detailing proposals to achieve the efficiency savings targets will be presented to Special Scrutiny Committees after April 2014 and before October 2014.

- (ii) Discretionary services to be reviewed in full, with a view to identifying savings proposals totalling over £8m. This review will also consider those statutory services where the level of service provision is currently above the statutory minimum level. In the first instance, a list of proposed areas to be reviewed will be presented to Special Scrutiny Committees to determine whether there are other areas that need to be considered. Following this, detailed proposals will be presented to Special Scrutiny Committees before October 2014.

8.3 Members are advised that this strategy will ultimately lead to a much higher percentage reduction in service in a number of, if not all, discretionary service areas. There is likely to be a considerable impact on the public and in some areas even up to a 100% reduction can and should be considered, to allow for some real choices. Appendix 7 provides an initial list of discretionary services that have been identified for review. Members should note that this list is not exhaustive and will be updated further for Special Scrutiny Committees.

8.4 It has been emphasised throughout the most recent Seminars, Scrutiny Meetings and Cabinet Meetings that an “early start” and an agreed “Strategy” is crucial to ensure that the Authority can maintain financial stability and confidence in its ability to financially manage its way through this period of austerity. Due to the number and complexity of reports that will need to be presented to Scrutiny Committees during the coming months, project management arrangements will be put in place to ensure that there is clarity around what is required and that reports are presented and considered in a timely manner.

9. LINKS TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

9.1 The Council currently has 6 longer-term priorities covering the period 2013 to 2017: -

- **Priority 1** – Our communities must be a safe, green and clean place to live to improve residents’ quality of life.
- **Priority 2** – We want to improve job opportunities in our County Borough, so people can live better lives.
- **Priority 3** – Every child should have the best start in life, and the opportunity to achieve success as a young person and as an adult.
- **Priority 4** – We want to enable our communities to make healthy lifestyle choices to improve citizens’ quality of life.
- **Priority 5** – Improving accessibility throughout the County Borough.
- **Priority 6** – Transforming Council homes, lives and communities.

9.2 The Council priorities are used as the basis for setting annual Improvement Objectives, which are a statutory requirement and reflect shorter-term priorities. The current Improvement Objectives are as follows: -

- **IO 1** – Ensure children and young people who are looked after are supported to achieve their full potential.

- **IO 2** – Improve job opportunities by implementing the Council's Passport Scheme.
- **IO 3** – Develop an effective and accessible Youth Service that supports the personal and social development of young people.
- **IO 4** - Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities.
- **IO 5** – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities.
- **IO 6** – Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless.

9.3 To set a balanced budget the Authority has had to deal with cuts in funding at an unprecedented level within a very short timescale. Despite this every effort has been made to limit 2014/15 savings requirements on those services directly supporting the delivery of the Council's Improvement Objectives. However, moving forward the significant level of further cuts required for future years will inevitably require a review of the Council's priorities to ensure that limited resources are targeted effectively and services are sustained as far as possible.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 Budget decisions at this level affect every resident in the County Borough, regardless of their individual circumstances and backgrounds.
- 10.2 A full impact assessment has not been undertaken on these draft proposals, however assessments are made on all individual reports and projects during the financial year. This is in order to ensure that decisions that affect different individuals and groups are assessed at an appropriate and relevant level.
- 10.3 Consultation with residents, done in accordance with the Council's Public Engagement Strategy and Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance, also ensures that every resident, regardless of circumstances, has the opportunity to have their views heard and considered in the Council's decision-making process.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Workforce Strategy was approved and adopted by Cabinet on 30 March 2010 and designed to reduce the impact on staff and to avoid, wherever possible, compulsory redundancies. There is currently a review and consultation process that commenced at the 4 December 2013 Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee that identified a number of additional options that Members will ultimately need to consider to ensure our Workforce Policies in respect of the MTFP are flexible enough to deal with the level of savings required in future years.
- 11.2 The financial outlook identifies the need to continue to require reductions in Council services and Members will need to consider carefully the personnel implications on the workforce when they consider proposals in the coming months and years.
- 11.3 The budget proposals include provision to pay the living wage, which will place the minimum hourly rate at £7.65.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 Since the announcement of the LG financial settlement an extensive consultation process has

been undertaken including a Members' Seminar, a series of Special Scrutiny Committee Meetings and consultation with Trade Unions and the Caerphilly Housing Task Group (CHTG). Community and Town Councils have also been consulted and the responses received to date are attached as Appendix 8g (any further responses that are received will be tabled at the Council meeting on 26 February 2014). A public consultation in respect of savings proposals has also been undertaken and this concluded on 20 December 2013. Appendices 8a to 8i provide details of the various consultations undertaken.

- 12.2 During the consultation process a petition has been submitted to the Authority containing 466 signatures objecting to the proposed closure of the cafeteria at Caerphilly Leisure Centre.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 Council are asked to consider the report and its Appendices and approve the following recommendations: -

13.1.1 The Authority operates the 2013/14 WG scheme in 2014/15 in respect of the Council Tax Pensioners Grant.

13.1.2 The Living Wage increase to £7.65 per hour is backdated to 1 November 2013.

13.1.3 The Revenue Budget proposals for 2014/15 of £332,032m as set out in this report are approved (see Appendix 1).

13.1.4 The Council Tax level for the financial year 2014/15 is increased by 3.90% (Council Tax Band D £954.78).

13.1.5 The indicative proposals contained in the Medium Term Financial Planning assumptions are approved as the basis for delivering a balanced budget over the forthcoming 3 years (i.e. 2014/15 to 2016/17) (see Appendix 2a and 2b).

13.1.6 The Capital Programme for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017 as set out in Appendix 5 is approved.

13.1.7 The use of the General Fund balances as detailed in Appendix 6 are approved, including the establishment of provisions for the 2013/14 pension deficit, 2014/15 Senior Officer suspension costs, 2013/14 arrears in respect of the Living Wage and potential delays in delivering 2014/15 savings proposals.

13.1.8 Up to £2.499m to be released from General Fund balances to fund one-off capital expenditure as cost avoidance or Invest to Save schemes. Bids to be considered on a case-by-case basis and agreed by Cabinet.

13.1.9 The financial strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 as set out in Section 8 of the report is agreed.

14. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 The Council is required annually to approve proposals to set a balanced budget, agree a Council Tax rate and update its Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- 14.2 Council is required to put in place a sound and prudent financial framework to support service delivery.

15. STATUTORY POWER

15.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Consultees: Cabinet Members
Corporate Management Team
Stephen Harris, Acting Head of Corporate Finance
Gail Williams, Monitoring Officer
David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Background Papers:

Provisional Local Government Settlement (16 October 2013)
Final Local Government Settlement (11 December 2013)
Report to Council (23 October 2013)
Report to Cabinet (19 December 2013)
Report to Cabinet (29 January 2014)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Net Revenue Budget 2014/15
Appendix 2a Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2016/17
Appendix 2b Schools Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2016/17
Appendix 3a Whole Authority – List of Potential Savings 2014/15
Appendix 3b Corporate Services – List of Potential Savings 2014/15
Appendix 3c HRA – List of Potential Savings 2014/15
Appendix 3d Social Services – List of Potential Savings 2014/15
Appendix 3e Environment – List of Potential Savings 2014/15
Appendix 3f Education & Lifelong Learning – List of Potential Savings 2014/15
Appendix 4 2014/15 Proposed Savings Withdrawn Following Consultation Process
Appendix 5 Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2016/17
Appendix 6 Movements on General Fund Balances
Appendix 7 Initial List of Discretionary Services Subject to Review
Appendix 8a Minutes of Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee (4 December 2013)
Appendix 8b Minutes of HSC&WB Scrutiny Committee (11 December 2013)
Appendix 8c Minutes of Regen. & Environment Scrutiny Committee (12 December 2013)
Appendix 8d Minutes of Education for Life Scrutiny Committee (16 December 2013)
Appendix 8e Minutes of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group meeting (9 January 2014)
Appendix 8f Minutes of Regen. & Environment Scrutiny Committee (20 January 2014)
Appendix 8g Community and Town Council Consultation Responses
Appendix 8h Trade Union Consultation Responses
Appendix 8i Summary of Public Consultation Responses

APPENDIX 1

NET REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15

	£' 000	£' 000
Base Budget 2013-14	337,466	
Adjustment for PFI Schemes	(7,308)	
Adjustment for Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant	(1,231)	
Revised Base Budget 2013-14		328,927
Transfers In 2014-15		
Council Tax Reduction Scheme Administration Subsidy	328	
Private Finance Initiative	7,308	
		7,636
Whole Authority Cost Pressures		
Pay excluding Teachers and other School staff @ 1% (Pay awards for Schools are provided within the cash pledge)	1,113	
Living wage	164	
Non pay inflation 1.5% (net of 1.5% fess & charges increases)	1,466	
WHQS - Capital Charges	792	
Supported Borrowing (Capital Financing)	270	
Local Government Borrowing Initiative - Highways	194	
Other Passported Grants to be supported by the Council	1,696	
		5,695
Service Pressures/Additional Funding		
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) additional liability	533	
Annual Landfill Tax increases	240	
Meeting the Schools Pledge (see Appendix 2a)	935	
Social Services Demographics	1,000	
Other Service Pressures	300	
Welfare Reform – implementation costs	100	
		3,108
Savings in advance RCCO		186
Savings achieved in advance for 2014/15		(122)
Savings Proposals – 2014/15		
Education and Lifelong Learning	(1,202)	
Social Services	(2,062)	
Environmental Services	(2,662)	
Corporate Services	(2,240)	
Insurance	(400)	
HRA Savings Impacting on General Fund	(1,338)	
Whole Authority less Council Tax Surplus treated as use of reserve	(3,494)	
		(13,398)

Total in year movement		3,105
Proposed Expenditure		332,032
Funding - Final Settlement		
WG Support		(272,584)
Council tax (3.90%)		(56,343)
Use of Outcome Agreement Grant		(1,905)
Use of Balances : Council Tax Surplus		(1,200)
Total Funding		(332,032)

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014/15 – 2016/17

	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
AEF (-2.91%/-1.34%/-1.34%)	(8,130)	(3,663)	(3,663)
Council Tax @ 2.35%	1,559	1,531	1,574
Total Funding	(6,571)	(2,132)	(2,089)
Pay 1.0%, 1.0%, 1.0%	1,113	1,113	1,113
Living Wage (assumes pledge funds schools)	164	164	164
Non-Pay Inflation (1.5% p.a.)	1,706	1,706	1,706
Non-Pay Inflation (1.5% p.a.) - Fees and Charges	(240)	(240)	(240)
WHQS - Capital Borrowing Costs	792	0	0
WHQS - HRA Recharges	0	0	0
Capital Financing	270	150	150
Local Government Borrowing Initiative	194	0	0
Other Passported Grants	1,696	0	0
Sub-Total	5,695	2,893	2,893
Service Pressures/Additional Funding			
CTRS Additional Liability @ 2.35%	321	329	337
Welfare Reforms LA Costs	100	100	100
Landfill Tax	240	240	240
Schools Pledge	935	343	348
Social Services Demographics	1,000	1,000	1,000
Other Service Pressures	300	300	300
Sub-Total	2,896	2,312	2,325
Total Shortfall	15,162	7,337	7,307
Deficit/Surplus b/f	122	(14,640)	(21,102)
Savings in advance RCCO	0	0	0
Savings in advance MTFP	0	0	0
Project Gwyrdd	0	875	365
Insurance	400	0	0
Cumulative Savings (shortfall)	(14,640)	(21,102)	(28,044)

SCHOOLS MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014/15 - 2016/17

	<u>2014/15</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2015/16</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2016/17</u> <u>£000</u>
Funding to meet pledge*	935	635	645
Inflationary Pressures			
Pay award - teachers (1%,1%,1%)	669	675	682
Pay award - APTC (1%, 1%,1%)	119	121	122
Non-pay (1.5%)	270	274	278
Service Pressures			
Estimated FSM numbers growth	50	50	50
Estimated floor area growth/Lump sum (Cwm Rhymni)	67	121	0
Estimated "other" floor area growth	20	20	20
		0	0
Cut allocated to Schools	-260	-626	-507
*Funding of Pledge			
General Fund (54%)	505	343	348
Additional Pupil Deprivation Grant (46%)	430	292	297
Total	935	635	645

Pupil Deprivation Grant funding to meet the pledge is subject to WG approval for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

WHOLE AUTHORITY – LIST OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS 2014/15

Service Area	Brief Description	2014-15 £'000
All Authority	Furniture Replacement Ty Penallta-Budget realignment	230.00
All Authority	Casual Mileage rate reduction from 55p to 45p-This expense to be paid at current HMRC rate	250.00
All Authority	Recharge to schools re carbon reduction credits	180.00
Misc Finance	E-Government-Aligning budget to spend	28.00
All Authority	Risk Management-Review of risk management fund	600.00
Misc Finance	Growth not seen as essential (after Fire Service Levy)	558.00
Misc Finance	LGBI Double Counted	194.00
Misc Finance	School pledge review – use of additional Pupil Deprivation Grant	432.00
Misc Finance	Outcome Agreement review	1,019.00
Misc Finance	Pupil demographic saving	253.00
All Authority	Council Tax Surplus 2013/14	1,200.00

Total: -

4,944.00

CORPORATE SERVICES – LIST OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS 2014/15

Ref No	Service Area	Brief Description	2014-15 £'000
Corp1	Corp. Fin.	HB & CTB-Vacancy management	67.00
Corp1 0	Corp. Fin.	Accountancy-Review of non salary costs	5.00
Corp1 1	Corp. Fin.	Reduction in treasury management budget	20.00
Corp1 2	H & S	Training Income-Budget realignment	58.00
Corp1 4	H & S	Vacancy Management	40.20
Corp1 6	Housing GRF	Vacancy Management	48.75
Corp1 8	Housing GRF	Review of non salary costs	3.00
Corp1 9	Housing GRF	Review of non salary costs	100.00
Corp2	Corp. Fin.	HB & CTB-Review of non salary costs	45.00
Corp2 2	HR	Vacancy Management	115.90
Corp2 3	HR	Review of non staffing costs	92.10
Corp2 4	HR	Budget realignment	15.00
Corp2 8	Inform & Engage	Altiris Cancellation-Contract termination - alternative solution in place	17.00
Corp2 9	Inform & Engage	Cancel Mosaic Dataset licence-Minimal impact envisaged on Customer Services over the next 3 years.	9.00
Corp3	Corp. Fin.	CTAX-Review of non salary costs	9.40
Corp3 0	Inform & Engage	Escrow services-Contract terminations.	17.00
Corp3 1	Inform & Engage	Cancellation of ICS membership-No impact on customers	10.00
Corp3 2	Inform & Engage	Centennial-Contract termination. Less expensive alternative solution being implemented	7.00
Corp3 3	Inform & Engage	Education IT SLA-Additional income generated from new hardware maintenance agreements	23.00
Corp3 4	Inform & Engage	Furniture and Equipment-Budget realignment	29.00
Corp3 5	Inform & Engage	Hitec-Contract termination - alternative solution being provided	9.00
Corp3 6	Inform & Engage	Insight DC Reduction-Reduced data centre equipment maintenance requirement	23.50
Corp3 7	Inform & Engage	Newsline reduction from 6 to 4 per year-	25.00

Corp3 8	Inform & Engage	Property costs for Caerphilly cash office-Savings on running costs from closure and move to new Caerphilly office	1.50
Corp3 9	Inform & Engage	Upgrade of telephones at Pontllotyn and Blackwood customer first offices resulting in ongoing revenue savings	1.00
Corp4	Corp. Fin.	Income-Vacancy management	20.10
Corp4 0	Inform & Engage	Right Now-Contract termination - In-house solution developed	11.00
Corp4 1	Inform & Engage	Singularity-Contract termination - In-house solution developed	17.00
Corp4 2	Inform & Engage	Stellent-Contract termination - Alternative solution being provided as part of the new Committee Management System	25.00
Corp4 3	Inform & Engage	Storage Virtualisation Mgt - Cancellation-Reduced data centre equipment maintenance requirement	22.00
Corp4 4	Inform & Engage	Sungard DR cancellation-Contract termination - Alternative in-house developed	20.00
Corp4 5	Inform & Engage	Telecommunication-Anticipated reductions in tariffs	10.00
Corp4 6	Inform & Engage	Twinning- Adopt a more passive twinning arrangement	5.00
Corp4 9	Inform & Engage	Vacancy management and IT Development restructure proposal to be completed in 2015/16.Will impact upon development activities	116.00
Corp5	Corp. Fin.	Income-Review of non salary costs	14.00
Corp5 3	Inform & Engage	Review of Schools IT Support charges-Increased SIMS and hardware maintenance due to increased hardware in schools	170.00
Corp5 8	Inform & Engage	Review mail room provision	50.00
Corp6	Corp. Fin.	Audit-Vacancy management	35.70
Corp6 0	Inform & Engage	Review of typing/reception provision	44.00
Corp6 2	Inform & Engage	Vacancy Management-Customer first	25.00
Corp6 4	Legal & Gov.	Members Allowances-Budget realignment	20.00
Corp6 5	Legal & Gov.	Printing of members reports-Limiting printing to potential attendees and copies in members area	15.00
Corp6 6	Legal & Gov.	Civic Office - Mayor	7.50
Corp6 7	Legal & Gov.	Vacancy management	10.00
Corp6 8	Legal & Gov.	Budget realignment-Voluntary Sector - Until 2012 VALREC but since used for Ad hoc commissioning	24.00
Corp7	Corp. Fin.	Audit-Review of non salary costs	12.00
Corp7 0	Legal & Gov.	Voluntary Sector - CAB -Budget realignment	3.50
Corp7 1	Legal & Gov.	Counsel fees-Budget realignment	40.00
Corp7	Legal & Gov.	Salary costs-Agreed reduction in hours	12.00

2			
Corp7 3	Procurement	Admin Recharge re Car Gass Scheme-funded from existing service budgets	10.00
Corp7 4	Property & Perf	Vacancy management	19.10
Corp7 5	Property & Perf	Review of transfer of property portfolio- Removal in agency working in 14/15 & further savings in 15/16 anticipated following full review	15.00
Corp7 6	Property & Perf	DDA budget-reduce revenue budget by 33% minor works	100.00
Corp7 8	Property & Perf	Consultancy budget-reduce consultancy costs - minimal impact	20.00
Corp7 9	Property & Perf	Vacancy Mgt	35.00
Corp8	Corp. Fin.	FSU-Vacancy management	45.20
Corp8 0	Property & Perf	Budget realignment	17.00
Corp8 3	Property & Perf	Energy budget efficiencies-Budget realignment	55.00
Corp8 4	Property & Perf	Reduce Planned maintenance budgets Corporate buildings by 39%	108.50
Corp8 5	Property & Perf	Increased income - Schools recharges-Recharges for management of new maintenance contracts	35.00
Corp8 6	Property & Perf	Maintenance contract efficiencies-Reduced running costs across existing Asset mgt budgets	70.00
Corp8 7	Property & Perf	Vacancy mgt - facilities management	53.00
Corp8 9	Property & Perf	PV Panels - income	40.00
Corp9	Corp. Fin.	Accountancy-Vacancy management	61.30
Corp6 9	Legal & Gov.	Voluntary Sector - CAB & GAVO-Review of contributions	19.00
Corp4 8	Inform & Engage	Review of customer first provision (reduced opening hours)	36.00

Total: - 2,259.25

HRA - LIST OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS 2014/15

Ref No	Service Area	Brief Description	2014-15 £'000
HRA1	HRA	Reduction in capital charges-budget realignment	30.00
HRA2	HRA	Review of contractor augmentation budget-delivered by service efficiencies	200.00
HRA3	HRA	Review of damp proofing/condensation budget-delivered by service efficiencies	100.00
HRA5	HRA	Various non salaried savings-budget realignment	37.80
HRA6	HRA	Vacancy management-Pending restructure	128.50
HRA7	HRA	Deferral of £10m environmental spend to 20/21	637.00
HRA8	HRA	Delay in recruitment of 3 no. env. officers to 20/21	90.00
HRA9	HRA	Vacancy Management	65.00
HRA4	HRA	Rephasing of telecare upgrading in sheltered schemes	50.00
		Total: -	1,338.30

APPENDIX 3d

SOCIAL SERVICES - LIST OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS 2014/15

Ref No	Service Area	Brief Description	2014/15 £'000
SS1a	Adult Services	In-House Homecare Service (HART) - Reconfigure back office and reduce staff numbers	299.00
SS1b	Adult Services	Transfer of 100 hours of In-House Homecare Service to independent sector	31.00
SS3	Children's Services	Review of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service	22.00
SS6	Adult Services	Retender for Cefn Glas & Plas Hyfryd Extra Care	70.00
SS7a	Adult Services	Increase charge for Meals on Wheels service by £1 per meal to £3.35	80.00
SS8a	Adult Services	Cease to provide Domestic Support to people in receipt of Supporting People commissioned service only	183.00
SS12	Children's Services	Review of staff rotas for short break service at Blackwood Resource Centre	50.00
SS13	Adult Services & Children's Services	Combine Adult Services and Children's Services front door	54.00
SS14	Children's Services	Review of Fostering Teams	90.00
SS15	Adult Services & Children's Services	Establish a cross-Directorate Commissioning Team	92.00
SS16	Children's Services	Review of Children's Services Locality Team structure	81.00
SS17	Adult Services & Children's Services	Review of Administrative support across the Directorate	100.00
SS18	Business Support	Review of Performance Management function	50.00
SS19	Adult Services	Review senior management structure	94.00
SS20	Children's Services	Review Children's Rights Service	54.00
SS21	Adult Services	Review Direct Care Management Structure	100.00
SS22	Adult Services & Children's Services	Review number of social workers	219.00
SS23	Adult Services	Charge ABHB for medication only calls	135.00
SS25	Adult Services	Termination of contract with Cancercareline	19.00
SS26	Adult Services	Stop payments to service users with learning disabilities attending day opportunities	17.00
SS27	Adult Services & Children's Services	Review voluntary sector contracts (£99k saving based on a 5% cut)	99.00
SS28	Adult Services	Withdrawal of the provision of staff meals in Community Support Services for Adults with a Learning Disability	11.00

SS29	Adult Services	Review of staffing budgets in Older People Residential & Day Care Establishments	89.00
SS31	Business Support	Full Year Effect of Enterprise House Closure	100.00
		Total: -	2,139.00

ENVIRONMENT - LIST OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS 2014/15

Ref No	Service Area	Brief Description	2014-15 £'000
Env1	Comm & Leisure	Parks & Bereavement Services - Vacancy management	44.00
Env3	Comm & Leisure	Cessation of CONFIRM management system licence- Introduction of in house solution	5.70
Env4	Comm & Leisure	Sports & Leisure Services Management Restructure	150.00
Env5	Comm & Leisure	Review concessionary pricing policy to introduce a 3 tier pricing system	100.00
Env7	Comm & Leisure	Sports & Leisure Services Match pricing structure to market value	35.00
Env8	Comm & Leisure	Introduce a Van & Trailer ban at Civic Amenity sites	50.00
Env9	Comm & Leisure	Waste Strategy & Operations Reducing Training Budget	10.00
Env10	Comm & Leisure	Asbestos Collection Service FULL cost recovery	6.00
Env11	Comm & Leisure	Building Cleaning Services - Introduce contract efficiency	50.00
Env12	Comm & Leisure	Waste Strategy & Operations Reduce Insurance Provision-Budget realignment	20.00
Env13	Comm & Leisure	Reduce Landfill Tax credit budget	11.00
Env16	Comm & Leisure	Cease provision of management grants to bowls clubs and Senghenydd splash pad	10.00
Env18	Comm & Leisure	Increase Outdoor Facilities charges by 20% for 3 years (72% cumulative increase)	20.00
Env20	Comm & Leisure	Review weekend park cleansing service	10.00
Env21	Comm & Leisure	Sports & Leisure Services - Improve energy efficiency facilities- may require some up front investment for longer term goal	23.00
Env23	Comm & Leisure	Charging for ALL replacement/new issue waste containers	63.00
Env24	Comm & Leisure	Charging full fee for those currently having free Residual Collections (charities, community centres etc)	60.00
Env25	Comm & Leisure	Waste Strategy & Operations - vacancy management	25.00
Env26	Comm & Leisure	Introduction of charges for garden waste collection services	80.00
Env28	Comm & Leisure	Reduce grass cutting frequency on Amenity/Housing Estates	180.00
Env29	Comm & Leisure	Closure of cricket squares not used	30.00
Env31	Comm & Leisure	Parks & Bereavement Services - Delete January cut of highways/banks	25.00
Env33	Comm & Leisure	Sports & Leisure Services - Centralisation of Admin support	30.00
Env36	Comm & Leisure	Waste Strategy & Operations vacancy management	180.00
Env37	Comm & Leisure	Introduce double shift working for mechanical sweeping	73.00
Env38	Comm & Leisure	Closure of 3 less well used Public Conveniences (Nelson, Newbridge and Fleur De Lys)	24.00
Env39	Comm & Leisure	Reduced contribution to weed removal team - will reduce service provision	100.00

Env40	Comm & Leisure	Phased removal of flowerbeds in open locations	40.00
Env42	Comm & Leisure	Residual Waste Collections Route optimisation	53.50
Env43	Comm & Leisure	Organics Waste Collections. Route optimisation	53.50
Env44	Comm & Leisure	Dry recycling Waste Collections. Route optimisation	53.50
Env47	Comm & Leisure	Review of CA site provision in accordance with WAO benchmarking recommendations	65.00
Env48	Comm & Leisure	Closure of Cafeteria in Caerphilly Leisure Centre	20.00
Env55	Engineering	Engineering Projects Group (EPG) Surplus	40.00
Env64	Engineering	Structures and Retaining Walls - a range of options to be considered re level of cuts available from 10% to 50%	50.00
Env65	Engineering	Consultancy Structures SLA - a range of options considered to reduce amount of work undertaken on contractual/non contractual work.	25.00
Env69	Engineering	Cease Special Works Programme - Used for in year service requests that do not sit within a nominated budget	90.00
Env70	Engineering	RASWA Inspectors increased coring regime could provide opportunity to increase default payback	10.00
Env73	Engineering	Festive Lighting - Remove LA support to Xmas lighting in Towns and villages	35.00
Env74	Engineering	SEW ring fenced surplus - 50% of surplus put forward as saving	50.00
Env75	Engineering	SEW Insurance money - budget realignment	10.00
Env83	Engineering	Review Bus Shelter cleansing operation	24.00
Env84	Engineering	Review Bus Shelter repairs & maintenance	30.00
Env85	Engineering	Review Bus Station Cleaning Blackwood and Bargoed	6.10
Env86	Engineering	Cease 2 week free Xmas parking in car parks	30.00
Env87	Engineering	Review SCP (School Crossing patrol) Site Assessments	10.00
Env88	Engineering	Connect2 Flexible Transport Service - Increase fares by 5%	1.00
Env110	Public Protection	Review Community Safety Warden provision	4.00
Env115	Public Protection	Catering Staff Restaurants - Increase prices by 5% for 3 years (15.7% cumulative increase)	12.00
Env117	Public Protection	Environmental Health Rat infestations introduced £20 fee	19.00
Env119	Public Protection	Catering Schools – Increase meal prices by 5% for 3 yrs (15.7% cumulative increase)	27.00
Env120	Public Protection	Catering Functions - Increase prices by 5% for 3 years (15.7% cumulative increase)	4.80
Env122	Public Protection	Crucial Crew – Cease service	13.00
Env123	Public Protection	Licensing Fees - 5% increase 3 consecutive years (15.7% cumulative increase)	8.00
Env124	Public Protection	Increase Pest Control Income	20.00
Env125	Public Protection	Annual increase Registration Fees	10.00
Env135	Regen & Planning	Increase in Industrial Property Rents	70.00
Env13	Regen &	Visit Caerphilly centre - Increased income.	11.00

6	Planning		
Env13 7	Regen & Planning	Cwmcarn - Increased income.	25.00
Env13 8	Regen & Planning	Llancaeath Fawr - Increased income.	25.00
Env13 9	Regen & Planning	BMI - Increased income	25.00
Env14 0	Regen & Planning	Vacancy Management	219.00
Env14 3	Regen & Planning	Supplies & services - budget realignment	77.00
Env14 4	Regen & Planning	Increase fees for Land Charges	4.00
Env14 5	Regen & Planning	Introduction of charges for pre-application planning advice	20.00
Env15 4	Regen & Planning	Restructure at BMI	27.00
Env15 8	Regen & Planning	Income for monitoring of LDP	20.00
Env16 0	Regen & Planning	Introduce Car parking charges at Country Parks	85.00
Env16 1	Regen & Planning	Charges for Invasive Species monitoring/removal	12.00
Env16 8	Regen & Planning	Reduction in Enhanced Maintenance Budget	80.00
	Regen & Planning	Community Regeneration Projects	15.00
		Total: -	2,944.10

APPENDIX 3f

EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING - LIST OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS 2014/15

Ref No	Service Area	Brief Description	2014-15 £'000
EDLL4	LEI	Music Service - Participation & Performance-More effective use of support & resources.	50.00
EDLL5	LEI	Review Behaviour Support provision & service	70.00
EDLL7	LEI	Inclusion service review	124.00
EDLL10	LEI	ALN Review - Delivery & Funding-Review	300.00
EDLL13	LEI	SEN Recoupment-Regional working	50.00
EDLL15	LEI	ALN Advisory Support Service-vacancy management & review	15.00
EDLL18	Lifelong Learning	Public Libraries-Reduce subscriptions budget	7.00
EDLL22	Lifelong Learning	Public Libraries-Book Fund Reduction (current budget £415k).	50.00
EDLL23	Lifelong Learning	Public Libraries-Review Corporate Cleaning of Library Sites	20.00
EDLL25	Lifelong Learning	Library HQ-Admin. Support - Restructure / Review	21.00
EDLL32	Lifelong Learning	Community Education - Youth-Outreach rentals budget for Oakdale area. Voluntary YC in the area so requirement has changed.	10.00
EDLL35	Planning & Strategy	Additional Recreation - District Use Secondary / Special-Realignment of budget	30.00
EDLL36	Planning & Strategy	Additional Recreation - Ynys Hywel Social Inclusion-Reduction due to the now non residential nature of the service	5.00
EDLL37	Planning & Strategy	Teachers Performance Mgt - 300k-Realignment of budget	25.00
EDLL38	Planning & Strategy	External Audit Fees-Realignment of budget	10.00
EDLL39	Planning & Strategy	School Support Finance-Additional SLA Income (Core - Premium)	20.00
EDLL40	Planning & Strategy	Finance-Realignment of income budget	40.00
EDLL42	Planning & Strategy	Transport-Home to School / College Transport. Efficiency Savings on Contracts.	50.00
EDLL48	Planning & Strategy	LMS Contingency	270.00
EDLL49	Planning & Strategy	CRB / Police Checks	10.00
EDLL50	Planning & Strategy	Vacancy Management	25.00
		Total: -	1,202.00

2014/15 PROPOSED SAVINGS WITHDRAWN FOLLOWING CONSULTATION PROCESS

Item	Ref	Amount
Casual Mileage HMRC rate reduction from 55p to 50p (50% of original proposal)	AA2	£125,000
Retain Voluntary Sector Support (CAB & GAVO)	Corp 69	£19,000
Increase Meals on Wheels Charge to be set at 25p instead of £1.00 per meal	SS7a	£60,000
Payments to Service Users with Learning disabilities	SS26	£17,000
Increase Outdoor facilities charges. Increase to be set at 10% instead of 20%	Env 18	£10,000
Weekend Park Cleansing Reduction	Env 20	£10,000
Charging for replacement waste containers	Env 23	£63,000
Charge for Garden Waste Collection	Env 26	£80,000
Civic Amenity Site provision (Rhydney)	Env 47	£65,000
Christmas Lighting	Env 73	£35,000
Rat Infestations charge	Env 117	£19,000
Other Service Pressures	Miscellaneous Finance	£125,000
TOTAL		£628,000

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 – 2016/17

Scheme	Indicative		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education and Lifelong Learning			
Health and Safety	300	300	300
Asset Management Strategy	600	600	600
Accommodation Requirements	200	225	225
School Security	100	100	100
School boiler replacement programme	224	220	220
Total Education and Lifelong Learning	1,424	1,445	1,445
Social Services			
Conditions surveys	170	425	425
Ty Iscoed	42	0	0
Min y Mynydd	17	0	0
Castle View	19	0	0
Ystrad Mynach	25	0	0
Risca Family Centre	25	0	0
Total Social Services	298	425	425
Directorate of Environment			
Bargoed Phase 3	43	0	0
Bargoed Cinema Development	2,000	3,100	0
Rail Bridge Newbridge Town Centre	43	0	0
Town Centres	0	50	50
Caerphilly - Park Lane	93	0	0
Commercial & industrial grants	50	50	50
Bargoed general	30	30	0
ERDF Match Funding	0	170	100
Countryside Schemes	212	217	217
Total Urban Renewal	2,470	3,617	417
Infrastructure/Retaining Walls	467	467	467
Forward Programme Advance Design/Land	42	42	42
Major Highways Reconstruction	525	525	525
Bridge Strengthening	297	297	297
Land Drainage	59	59	59
Corporate Land Drainage	189	125	125
Street Lighting	0	100	100
Vehicle Restraint System	42	42	42
Monmouth canal	212	212	212
Road safety speed management schemes	50	50	50
Minor highway schemes	50	50	50
Corporate maintenance of tips, mines & spoils	100	100	100
Carriageway Resurfacing LGBI Funded Scheme	2,800	0	0

Total Engineers	4,833	2,069	2,069
Cemeteries	224	500	0
Islwyn Indoor Bowls	17	0	0
Total Community and Leisure Services	241	500	0
Kitchen refurbishments	425	425	425
CCTV Replacement	75	75	75
Total Public Protection	500	500	500
Voluntary Sector Capital Grants	170	170	170
HOV ENDURE	30	30	30
Llancaiach Fawr	0	0	50
Total Regen, Planning and Economic Development	200	200	250
Total Directorate of Environment	8,244	6,886	3,236
Corporate Services			
Disabled Access Needs	42	45	0
Community Centres	220	0	100
Graig-y-Rhacca Pavilion	0	250	0
Aneurin Bevan Pavilion	0	150	0
Libraries Refurbishment	0	70	0
Leisure Centres (pending options appraisal)	557	80	200
Corporate Buildings	0	0	200
Asset Management Rationalisation (Demolition/ Disposal Works)	0	0	100
Total Performance and Property	819	595	600
I.T. Developments	212	212	220
I.T. Developments - APP Development	0	0	75
Total Information and Citizen Engagement	212	212	295
Renovation /Home Improvement Grants	515	515	515
Minor Works	800	800	800
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,150	1,150	1,150
Total Private Housing	2,465	2,465	2,465
Total Corporate Services	3,496	3,272	3,360
Total Capital Programme	13,462	12,028	8,466

MOVEMENTS ON GENERAL FUND

	£,000	£,000
Opening Balance 1.4.2013		14,272
2013/14 Approved Commitments: -		
Pension Deficit 2013/14 (Estimated)	(500)	
Living Wage backdating to November 2013	(50)	
CEO/Deputy CEO Suspension Provision for 2014/15	(358)	
21st Century Schools (as previously agreed by Council)	(4,000)	
	<hr/>	
Sub-Total: -		(4,908)
Projected 'Take' from 2014/15 Underspends: -		
Education and Lifelong Learning	217	
Social Services	698	
Directorate of Environment	351	
Corporate Services	510	
Miscellaneous Finance	897	
	<hr/>	
Sub-Total: -		2,673
Council Tax Surplus 2013/14 (Estimated)		1,200
Release of Icelandic Bank Impairment (Landsbanki)		1,262
		<hr/>
Closing Balance 31.3.2014		14,499
2014/15 Commitments: -		
2013/14 Council Tax Surplus to Support 2014/15 budget savings	(1,200)	
Part year impact of agreed savings proposals	(800)	
	<hr/>	
Sub-Total: -		(2,000)
		<hr/>
Closing Balance 31.3.2015		12,499
		<hr/> <hr/>

INITIAL LIST OF DISCRETIONARY SERVICES

- Customer First
- Asset Rationalisation – Corporate & non-corporate buildings
- Council Tax Pensioners Grant
- Apprenticeship Scheme
- Corporate grants to voluntary sector
- Communications
- Library Services
- Community Centres
- Community Education
- Music Service
- Home to School Transport (discretionary element)
- Some Cleansing including town centres, residential streets and public conveniences
- Some Grounds Maintenance, Parks and Outdoor Facilities including bowling greens, cricket squares, grass pitches & park ranger services
- Civic Amenity Sites
- Leisure Services including leisure centres and sports development
- Street Lighting
- School Crossing Patrol Service
- Public Bus Service
- CCTV Services incl. CCTV control room
- Community Safety Wardens
- Health Improvement
- Business Development Services
- Industrial Properties including Council operated industrial estates
- Town Centre Management
- Events & Marketing
- Country Parks including Public Rights of Way and environmental maintenance

- Tourism Venues & Facilities
- Urban Renewal & Sustainability
- Day Centre provision
- Meals on Wheels, Civic and Sheltered Housing Catering
- Adult Services – Shopping Service



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH DECEMBER 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor H. W. David - Chairman
Councillor Mrs J. Summers - Deputy Chairman

Councillors:

L. Binding, C. Hawker, Ms. J.G. Jones, A. Lewis, C. P. Mann, S. Morgan, D. Rees

Also Present:

Cabinet Member(s): Councillors K.V. Reynolds (Corporate Services), G. Jones (Housing) and Mrs C. Forehead (Human Resources and Governance/Business Management)

Together with:

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), S. Harris (Acting Head of Corporate Finance), L. Jones (Head of Information, Communication and Technology), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property), P. Davy (Head of Programmes), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. G. Carter, C .J. Cuss, Mrs D. Ellis, J. E. Fussell, G. Kirby, R. Saralis and J. Taylor and D. T. Hardacre (Cabinet Member Performance and Asset Management)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the start or during the course of the meeting.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

2. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2014/15 - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

N. Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer presented the report which gave an overview of the savings requirements for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 along with a range of proposed savings and efficiencies for Members consideration and comment. The proposals detailed related specifically to the "Whole Authority" Directorate of Corporate Services, General Fund Housing and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The extent of the savings requirement for the whole Authority was clarified and Members noted that £14.53m was required in 2014/15, £6.54m for 2015/16 and £7.06m for 2016/17 a projected three-year saving requirement of £28.13m. Members were referred to Appendix B of the report which provided details of the proposed savings and efficiencies and an assessment of the options going forward were highlighted in the Officer's presentation.

Savings achievable in 2014/15 were listed. The proposed savings in relation to insurance were outlined. It was noted that insurance provision was reviewed every few years and any monies not required in the "reserve" were reallocated to the capital programme, hence this revenue saving would be to the detriment of the capital programme.

Further savings were proposed through the use of funds assigned for the payback of the furniture at Penallta House and reducing the casual mileage rate from 55p to 45p in line with the HMRC rate. It would also be possible to secure income from a recharge to schools in relation to carbon reduction credits, a charge that schools should be picking up under delegation requirements but was currently being absorbed by Corporate Services. Further savings could also be achieved through the re-alignment of the E-Government budget and the use of council tax surplus achieved. However the council tax surplus could not be guaranteed and the diversion of funds to revenue savings from the general fund balances would again have implications for the capital programme.

Members were referred to the vacancy management savings listed and were advised that as these were spread over a range of services there would not be a fundamental impact on service provision in 2014/15. It was proposed that a saving of £719,000 could be achieved in 2014/15 through removal of 24 posts within Corporate Services, which were currently unoccupied.

It was proposed that further savings could be achieved by reducing the number of issues of Newline from 6 to 4 per year, reducing Customer First opening hours, adopting a more passive twinning arrangement, reducing Civic Office commitments and hospitality provision and reducing committee print costs by printing hard copies for attendees only.

The Acting Director confirmed that non-pay related budgets could also be reviewed and achieve savings through tighter budgetary controls. IT contracts could be realigned to produce savings and the removal of the subsidy currently being provided to schools for curriculum based IT support would generate an income stream from the recharging of this service.

It was also proposed that savings be made by reducing the voluntary sector spend and Members were advised that this would be the first reduction made in this area and would relate primarily to the budget allocated for the commissioning of one off pieces of work.

The proposed savings in relation to the Housing Revenue Account were noted. Members were referred to possible savings associated with the deferring of £10m of environmental works to 2020/21 plus additional savings relating to the 3 associated environmental posts included under the WHQS improvement programme. Members were advised that these and other options would also be put forward for consideration by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. The Officer confirmed that these proposals would be subject to confirmation from Welsh Government that there would be no impact on the £7.3m annual capital grant for WHQS.

Further proposals for savings in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were highlighted and it was noted that at this point efficiency savings alone would not be sufficient to deliver the required savings and service delivery would need to be reviewed. Discretionary services would be subject to review and the way in which tourism events and venues, leisure and library services were being delivered would also need to be reviewed going forward, along with a range of other proposals. Further reports would be required to enable Members to determine their priorities.

Proposals for an asset rationalisation programme and customer service review were referenced for 15/16 and 16/17 and Members were advised that the budget strategy going forward would be very different.

In summary the Acting Director of Corporate Services confirmed that even if all of the whole Authority including the Corporate Services and HRA savings were taken for 2014/15, a funding gap of £6m would still remain for other Authority services to cover. Members views and comments in order to progress the consultation process were welcomed as they would provide a platform for further proposals going forward.

The Chair thanked the Acting Director for her report and presentation and invited Members comments.

A Member raised concerns in relation to the proposed reduction to the employee mileage rate, particularly when considering the impact on members of staff (particularly low paid staff) where the use of the car for work is an essential element e.g. homecare assistants.

The Chair acknowledged the concerns raised by the Member but as the issue in question would be considered in greater detail under the next item requested that discussion be deferred until this point in the agenda and this was agreed.

Clarification was sought in relation to reference CORP19 - Homeless Packs Budget. Officers confirmed that this budget was used to provide additional support for homeless individuals being housed, specifically in relation to the purchase of items of furniture and was not a statutory requirement. Members were mindful that this saving would impact on the most deprived within the community.

The impact of savings proposed against the upgrading of the Telecare system within Sheltered Housing were discussed and a Member referenced the potential impact for delayed transfer of care, additional staffing and support requirements if the system in place was not sufficient to meet the needs of the prospective tenant. Officers confirmed that the intention would be to deliver the upgrades on a phased basis rather than a blanket installation and would not have a detrimental impact to the service. The Member argued that the suitability of the accommodation would be under question should the system upgrade be delayed and would directly impact on the quality of life and independence of the tenant resulting in extended residential care or hospital stays at additional cost to the authority in excess of that required to make the upgrade. The officer contended that this was very unlikely to be the case.

Members requested that a further analysis be carried out, in order to compare the costs of making the upgrades against those associated with delayed transfers of care or an extended stay in residential services.

Clarification was sought in relation to the identification of possible income streams within Corporate Services. The Officer confirmed that some recharging had been identified relating to schools however there was very little opportunity within Corporate Services for income generation from outside of the Authority i.e. the public.

Reference was made to Customer First services and the nature of the savings that could be made and what areas would be affected. Members were advised that these savings could be achieved through a revision of opening hours, for example adapting opening hours to meet

demand, closing earlier in quiet periods and not opening on Saturdays. It was envisaged that Blackwood, Bargoed, Caerphilly and Penallta House centres could be affected by the savings proposals but these more radical proposals were for 2015/16 and 2016/17. Officers confirmed that the mobile service would become operational in April 2014 and this could mitigate the effects of the reduced hours, supplementing the services provided to the public.

Clarification was sought in relation to the DDA cuts and Officers confirmed that they were confident that they could make a 33% saving without a detrimental impact on the service identified as the Council had made a significant investment in this area over past years. It was emphasised that this proposal did not affect the capital programme.

Members discussed asset rationalisation and referenced the proposed saving in respect of the closure of Pontllanfraith House listed for 2016/17. Officers confirmed that a further full report on the range of options for asset rationalisation would be brought forward for Members consideration in the summer. Reducing the asset portfolio had the potential to secure savings of approximately £500k - £1m. However, longer lead in times would be required in order to fulfil the necessary consultation and statutory requirements associated with any building closure.

Clarification was sought in relation to the proposed savings against COR89, PV Panels and Officers confirmed that unless they were incorporated into a new build or as part of an invest to save scheme installations would be brought to an end. However depending on the nature of the spend against the potential income generation consideration would be given to suggestions for one off capital spends dependent on a robust business case.

Concerns were expressed in relation to the reduction of funding to voluntary sector organisations. Officers confirmed that these grants had been held at the same level over the last 2/3 years and cuts in this area had to be considered along with all other proposals.

Members were reminded that the options presented were only proposals for consideration and no decisions would be made at this time. Further more detailed reports would be brought forward to Scrutiny (if an additional Special Scrutiny was requested), Cabinet and finally to full Council for determination.

Members noted the reduction to planned maintenance schedules and the risks of neglecting smaller repairs that had the potential to cause bigger more costly repairs with the passage of time. Officers acknowledged this risk, however, they would look at reducing less essential maintenance in the first instance, for example decoration of office buildings. It was anticipated that as the asset portfolio reduced, there would be less risk.

Clarification was sought in relation to CORP82, non corporate building rationalisation and Members were advised of the intention to analyse the current property portfolio in order to identify the 75 worse performing buildings held within the authority. This list would be further drilled down in order to identify the feasibility of releasing the buildings identified. It was noted that these savings were proposed against the 2016/17 savings requirement as they would require further consultation and reports.

The Acting Director for Corporate Services clarified that the figures listed for 2014/15 were known to be deliverable within that financial year. Figures listed for 2015/16 and 2016/17 were estimated and would require further detailed reports and analysis but requested that Members take a view on the principal of the proposals before them and accept that further reports would be required.

Members agreed that they could support a programme of asset rationalisation if it saved jobs, but requested further information on the types of buildings that would be incorporated and whether there would be any impact on service delivery.

Officers confirmed that a detailed rationalisation criteria would be part of the scrutiny process going forward and would always look to preserve services.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services thanked Members for their comments and emphasised the crucial role that Scrutiny would play in the difficult times ahead. All comments would be taken into account and further reports would be brought forward to Cabinet with their recommendations to Council for determination at the end of February 2014.

Having fully discussed the report and the issues involved the Scrutiny Committee determined that it would support the recommendation within the Officer's report subject to more detailed information in relation to savings proposals for 15/16 and 16/17.

With regard to the other matters raised Members requested further detail on the cost associated with potential delayed transfers of care/extended residential costs when set against the cost of a universal update of the Telecare systems over a phased upgrade and further detail on the asset rationalisation programme in terms of the criteria and buildings being considered and their impact on service delivery.

3. WORKFORCE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL BUDGET SAVINGS.

G. Hardacre, Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development presented the report which outlined a range of options for managing workforce resources in line with the requirements of the medium term financial plan budget savings.

The report encapsulated all possible options going forward in order to allow Members to fully debate the proposals as part of the consultation process. The Officer recognised the work already being done by Heads of Service and others in recognising workforce planning opportunities. Members were also advised that discussions around many, but not all, of the proposals included in the report had commenced with Trade Unions on either a formal or informal basis.

In terms of redeployment and the use of agency staff, a reduction of £1.5m per annum had already been achieved against agency expenditure in recent years. Members were now asked to consider options for reviewing agency staffing and where internal resources could be prioritised in order to afford some form of protection to staff. It was emphasised that this was a workforce planning issue and savings would not be generated.

Members were referred to section 4.4.4 of the report and the proposal to introduce a default retirement age. The Officer advised that whilst there were sound workforce planning reasons for its introduction, particularly in the light of the demographics of the CCBC workforce, there was also the potential for legal challenge and this could prove to be unpopular with older workers.

Options for reducing pay bill costs were detailed and reference was made to possible changes to sickness benefits, including not paying benefits for the first three days, however any changes to the scheme would need to be negotiated with Trade Unions. In terms of savings in relation to expenses costs, Members were asked to consider a reduction to the HMRC rate to 45p per mile. It was estimated that savings of approximately £250k could be achieved as a result of the rate change and would remove a tax burden from some employees. This option had already been introduced by other authorities in Wales.

In relation to possible savings through service changes and business process re-engineering Members were advised of the different options for consideration and a proposal enabling the purchase of additional annual leave was referenced. Possible savings could also be achieved through flexible working, home working, hot desking and other office rationalisation

programmes. Pontllanfraith House was referred to as a savings proposal. The transfer of services to third party organisations or externalisation was referenced as an alternative to closure options, however TUPE and other code of practice requirements would need to be considered.

The different options that could be utilised in order to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies were listed which included seeking 85 year rule volunteers, early retirement volunteers, cross matching staff, flexible retirement and voluntary severance.

Finally the Officer advised that if all the measures referred to did not deliver the required savings then compulsory redundancies would be necessary, however full consideration would be given when reviewing any proposed redundancy arrangement, including the level of payments to be provided in order to ensure that this was the only and most cost effective option available.

Mr Gary Enright, Branch Secretary Unison, representing the collective trade unions responded to the report and highlighted their position in relation to the proposals outlined. Mr. Enright assured Members of the commitment of the trade unions to communicate, negotiate and build solid foundations during the difficult times ahead. However they were not prepared to negotiate around any cuts to pay or terms and conditions and were calling for no compulsory redundancies.

Mr Enright requested that Members consider calling for a review of zero hour contracts, agency and casual workers and the areas in which they were being deployed in order to identify the level of reliance upon these options. Members were urged not to consider a cap to the default retirement age as this would bring a collective legal challenge from the Trade Unions. In relation to the reduction to the mileage rate, Members were asked to carefully consider the financial impact on those affected, particularly low paid female workers. The Trade Unions proposed that Members consider a review of all expense payments be conducted and further options such as directorate specific capped expense budgets, more stringent budgetary planning, car share and greater use of video conferencing be explored before considering the proposed reduction. Members were also asked to reconsider the option put forward in relation to the purchase of annual leave, unions felt that take up by staff would be limited due to already stretched household budgets and furthermore might result in a negative perception from employees and impact staff morale.

Confirmation was given that any change to sickness benefit would be opposed by the Trade Unions, as would the option referenced in section 4.6.5 of the report in relation to outsourcing. However the proposed programme of asset rationalisation would be fully supported if it protected jobs and requested that Members consider bringing forward the proposals for the closure of Pontllanfraith House. In terms of 'cross matching' opportunities Members were asked to be mindful of potential indirect discrimination issues and Mr Enright requested further detail be provided on the implementation of this option before pursuing the proposal. The Trade Unions would also support options 4.7.4 and 4.7.5 relating to flexible retirement and voluntary severance, however the revised Pension 2014 Regulations would need to be taken into account.

Finally Mr Enright confirmed the Trade Unions opposition to Compulsory Redundancies and asked that Members explore every other avenue before going down this route.

The Chair thanked Mr Hardacre and Mr Enright for their contributions and invited the Acting Director of Corporate Services to respond.

The Acting Director of Corporate Services clarified the areas of spend and the savings requirement that needed to be secured and confirmed that further more detailed reports would be brought forward during the first half of 2014/15. Assurances were given that any and all options would be explored and that nothing would be left off the table.

In relation to the reduction of the mileage allowances, Members were advised that other options were being considered including capping mileage payments for longer journeys, primary undertaken by higher paid Officers. Members were advised that although the asset rationalisation programme would provide some significant savings it would not of itself secure all the savings required and would not be deliverable during 2014/15.

Members were reminded that no decisions were being made at this stage, the proposals before Members represented the first step in the process providing Officers with a measure on Members opinions.

The Chair thanked all parties for their contributions and Members questions and comments were welcomed.

Members expressed concern with regard to any reduction to the mileage allowance, particular reference was made to home care and reablement services where access to a car was an essential element of the post. Members also referenced the loss of the essential car user allowance which directly facilitated the setting of the current 55p allowance and felt that any further reduction to this would be unacceptable. Rather than capping mileage allowances for longer journeys Members requested that the use of a pool car or car share options be explored for out of county journeys. Members also requested an analysis of all expense costs in order to get a better understanding of the nature of the expenditure and the figures involved. Member's fully supported the agile work practices referenced within the report.

Members having discussed the issues, felt they could not support the introduction of a council set retirement age but agreed that full support should be provided to those seeking early or flexible retirement subject to any cost or service provision implications. Officers confirmed that any such requests would need to be supported by a robust business case.

The use of casual, agency and temporary staff was discussed at length including issues with regard to continuous service and other contractual implications for the Authority and Members requested their use be reviewed and a more detailed report submitted for their consideration. The Officer confirmed that this detail had been provided within the Workforce Development Report, however further information could be brought forward if appropriate or emailed out to Members if that was their preference. Members requested that a more in-depth report be presented for their consideration.

Members agreed that they could not support the general principle of outsourcing and any proposals to externalise specific services would need to be considered on the basis of a detailed business case. A Member referenced the use of Social Enterprises as a possible service provision option for consideration and this was debated at length. Mr Enright was of the opinion that this was simply outsourcing by another name and this was immediately refuted by the Member concerned.

Members agreed that the level of detail presented was not adequate to afford them the opportunity for informed consultation but as this was the first step in the process welcomed the presentation of more in-depth information going forward.

Having fully discussed the report and the issues involved the Scrutiny Committee determined that it was unable to support the proposals in relation to the general principle of outsourcing, the reduction to the mileage allowance, the introduction of a council retirement age and any changes to sickness benefit.

With regard to other matters the Scrutiny Committee requested further detail on the use of casual/agency staff and an analysis of all expenses costs. The Scrutiny Committee determined that it could support the remaining recommendations subject to more detailed information.

The meeting closed at 19:40 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2014, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN

SPECIAL HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH DECEMBER 2013 AT 5.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Ackerman - Chairman

Councillors:

A. P. Angel, Mrs G. Bevan, L. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, L. Gardiner, N. George, C. Gordon, G.J. Hughes, S. Morgan, J.A. Pritchard.

Cabinet Member: Councillor R. Woodyatt, Cabinet Member for Social Services.

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services), J. Williams (Interim Assistant Director Adult Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director Children Services), C. Forbes Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer).

Users & Carers: Mr C. Luke and Mrs M. Veater.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors E. Aldworth, Mrs .J. Gale, Mrs B. Jones, Mrs P. Griffiths and K. Dawson,

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from Councillors G. Hughes, L. Ackerman, C. Gordon, L. Binding, J.A. Pritchard, Mrs P. Cook and Mrs M. Veater (Co-opted Member) - Agenda Item 3(1), details are minuted with the respective item.

Clarification was sought with regard to declarations of interest as it was felt that all Members would have some form of interest in this item whether personally, professionally, through a family member or friend. Members were advised that as the item presented was only being discussed in general terms as part of the consultation process they should declare their interest but would not be precluded from taking an active part in the discussions.

3. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2014/15 - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Councillor G. Hughes declared an interest as his mother receives residential care services at

Valley Manor Nursing Home, Councillor L. Ackerman declared an interest as her mother receives homecare services, Councillor C. Gordon declared an interest as his mother receives homecare services, Councillor L. Binding declared an interest as he is employed by Rhondda Cynon Taff Council that provides day services to Caerphilly residents, Councillor J.A. Pritchard declared an interest as she is a trustee for CHAD, Councillor P. Cook declared an interest as she is a trustee for Disability Can Do and Mrs M Veater declared an interest as she is a trustee for the Cancer Care Line.

Mr D. Street, Director of Social Services presented the report which outlined the potential areas of contribution from Social Services towards the Council's savings requirements for 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The savings requirements for the Council were detailed and Members were advised that £28m would need to be delivered over the next three years with £14.5m required in 2014/15. The need to ensure the deliverability of the 2014/15 savings was emphasised and those options were highlighted for Members consideration and comment.

The impact of the proposed savings were categorised as low, medium or high impact in relation to service delivery and those considered to have a low impact were outlined in the first instance. With regard to vacancy management Members were advised that £761,000 of savings could be achieved through the deletion of 16.5 full time equivalent posts. The gradual move to externalise the HART service at a rate of 100 hours per annum could achieve £31,000 of possible savings. It was noted that the service currently operated at a mix of 72% external provision and 28% internal provision and it was proposed that rather than recruiting to any forthcoming vacant posts the associated hours be transferred to the independent sector, which would gradually increase the proportion of the service commissioned externally over a period of time.

The tendering exercise at Cefn Glas and Plas Hydfryd Extra Care had already secured savings of £70,000 and a proposed increase charge of £1 per meal to £3.35 for the Meals on Wheels service would secure a further £80,000. In relation to the Meals on Wheels service Members were advised that the service was currently operating at a loss and the proposed increase was the only option available to ensure the viability of the service.

Further savings could be achieved by reviewing the staffing rotas at Blackwood Resource Centre, making a recharge to Aneurin Bevan Health Board for medication only calls and terminating the contract with Cancercareline. £17,000 could be achieved by stopping attendance payments for Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities. Members were advised that efficiencies of 5% would also be sought from voluntary sector partners and if achieved would secure savings of £99,000.

The final proposed low impact savings were confirmed as £11,000 by withdrawing the provision of staff meals from Community Support Services, £89,000 by realigning staffing budgets in Older People Residential and Day Care establishments with actual spend and £100,000 secured as a result of the full year effect of the Enterprise House closure. This provided savings of £761,000 through vacancy management and £710,000 from other low impact sources.

The medium to high impact category savings were then presented for Members consideration and the Director confirmed that these options would have an affect on service levels. It was noted that ceasing to provide domestic support for service users in receipt of a Supporting People commissioned service would achieve £183,000 of savings, this was noted to be a discretionary service to 341 service users. Reviewing the structure of the Children's Service Locality Team, Senior Management structure and Direct Care Management structure and their associated potential redeployments could secure £81,000, £94,000 and £100,00 of savings respectively. The high impact savings proposed concerned reviewing Social Worker posts and could potentially achieve £219,000 of savings.

Members were advised that in order to achieve the level of savings proposed working practices would need to change and business process realigned to cut through bureaucracy, review mechanism needed to become more succinct and proportionate and by doing so this would enable Social Workers to concentrate their efforts on front line service provision.

Members were advised that the total savings for 2014/15 should all the proposed options be put forward as detailed was £2,139,000, however this would still mean a £3.8m gap to be found from other Directorates.

In relation to the required savings for 2015/16 and 2016/17 Members were advised that these would be more difficult to achieve going forward and would mean securing efficiencies against essential and statutory services. It was noted that even if a 3% efficiency was applied it would only generate £5.1m of the £14m requirement for those financial years. There would need to be a fundamental change to service delivery, discretionary services would need to be reviewed and a very different budget strategy considered going forward. Further externalisation could be required and certain services could be lost. The staffing structure review could be continued on from 2014/15 but in doing so there would be implications for social care provision and business model design in order to strip away any inefficiencies.

Members were reminded that the impact of the forthcoming Social Services Health and Wellbeing Bill must also be considered in the context of the saving requirements and would be subject to a further report to Members in the New Year. The Bill requires local authorities to respond to people's well-being needs as well as maintaining preventative services, however the viability of these measures would need to be considered against the level of savings to be made. This would require some extremely careful planning going forward.

In conclusion the Director of Social Service acknowledged the difficult times ahead and invited Members to comment on the proposals presented and highlight any specific areas of concern. However should a particular option prove to be unacceptable to Members, that they then offered an alternative efficiency area for consideration.

The Chair thanked the Director of Social Services for his presentation and Members comments were welcomed as part of the consultation process.

Clarification was sought in relation to the externalisation of Homecare services. The Officer confirmed that efficiencies were achievable through reducing administration and back office costs with further savings to be achieved through the gradual externalisation of the service. It was noted that TUPE and other issues would be taken into consideration should full externalisation be required.

Mrs Veater raised concerns with regard to the impact of the savings on care in the community and the risks associated with reducing services to such a point that safety nets and systems could fail leaving people vulnerable. The importance of maintaining networks between the different sectors was emphasised in order to safeguard the service user.

A Member expressed his support for the administration and back office efficiencies suggested as long as they did not equate to redundancy measures however he could not support any further externalisation of the service. The Member referred to Appendix B and item SS2 and sought clarification in relation to the externalisation/reconfiguration of current in-house Elderly Residential Homes. The Officer confirmed that although in house provision was well occupied at the moment, there were substantial elderly frail bed vacancies and this would need to be addressed going forward. It was noted that many providers were considering selling off elderly frail services and if this vacancy trend continued a remodelling of residential services as a whole would need to be undertaken. The Officer confirmed that this type of review required much longer lead in times hence the 2016/17 timeframe.

Members referred to SS8b and SS10 and the proposed savings against the domestic and shopping services and sought clarification as to any eligibility criteria and when it was last

reviewed. The Officer confirmed that he did not have that information to hand but agreed to would forward to the Member concerned after the meeting. Members asked that consideration be given to reviewing charging options and eligibility criteria rather than losing those particular services.

Clarification was sought with regard to Meals on Wheels and whether the service was provided on assessment or through individual choice. The Officer confirmed that the service had been reviewed 12 months ago and its provision was subject to an eligibility criteria. However there were now a whole range of alternative options for meal provision available to individuals and the current Meals on Wheels service was experiencing a year on year decline in numbers. Members acknowledged the changes in people's shopping practices including online and telephone ordering facilities and queried if assistance could be provided in this area. The Officer confirmed that alternative models would be looked at and advised that the long term sustainability of the current Meals on Wheels model required further review due to its falling numbers.

The proposed changes to Homecare provision was discussed and a Member expressed concerned that the balance between the externalisation of the service and providing continuity of care to the service user should not be lost. The Officer recognised the impact that the proposed savings could have on service provision models and advised they would flag up potential risks to ensure that Members were aware of any associated performance issues.

Members agreed that the increased charge for Meals on Wheels was acceptable and that other options for this type of service provision be investigated. Members also agreed that withdrawing the provision of staff meals from Community Support Services was acceptable.

Members discussed the disparity in charges for Caerphilly services when compared to other local authorities and suggested that this be reviewed. Officers referred to the recent Task and Finish Group that reviewed charging levels for non-residential social services in detail, and stated that the recommended increases will be implemented shortly, however they reminded Members that there is a £50 per week charging cap imposed by Welsh Government. It was agreed that the use of Task and Finish Groups to look in detail at some of the savings proposals would be the beneficial.

Clarification was sought with regard to out of county placements for children and an Officer explained the different reasons for securing an out of county placement and the balance between filling vacant in county beds against offering the most appropriate placement possible for the child concerned.

Clarification was sought in relation to the four levels of the eligibility criteria and whether this needed to be realigned in order to safeguard the most vulnerable within the community. Officers confirmed that a National Eligibility Criteria for Wales was under consideration as part of the Social Services, Health and Well Being Bill and this could mean substantial changes for the Authority. However these changes would not necessarily equate to savings and most people coming through the system were already at a moderate/high eligibility level.

Members expressed their support for the quality of services currently being provided by this Authority and their confidence in the recommendations of Officers going forward. In terms of the externalisation of services Members sought assurances that providers would be subject to rigorous checks to ensure the quality of the service being provided. The Director of Social Services confirmed that robust mechanisms would be put in place to hold providers to account with regard to quality.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contributions and acknowledged the very real need to review deliverability and methods of working in order to provide the best platform going forward. The establishment of Task and Finish Groups as part of the process of change was welcomed as was further detail on the impact of the Social Services Health and Well Being Bill and the National Eligibility Criteria for Wales.

The Scrutiny Committee having fully considered the report supported the list of proposed savings as detailed in Appendix B of the report subject to the above comments and further detail on the impact on service delivery and further reports to Cabinet and Council and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

The meeting closed at 18.01 pm.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2014.

CHAIRMAN



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD
MYNACH ON THURSDAY, 12TH DECEMBER 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs A. Blackman, J. Bevan, R.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, R.W. Gough, S. Kent, M.J. Prew,
Mrs D. Price and Mrs E. Stenner.

Cabinet Members:

K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), D.V. Poole (Community
and Leisure Services) and T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering).

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), P. Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning),
R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services),
M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny
Research Officer) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, C.J. Cuss, Ms
E. Forehead, A.G. Higgs and Ms J.G. Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the start of the meeting. During the course of
the meeting, Councillors J. Bevan, D.T. Davies and C. Elsbury declared an interest in an item
under discussion. Details are minuted with the respective item.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following.

3. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2014/15 – SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive, introduced the report to Members, which gave an overview of the savings requirements for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 along with a range of proposed savings and efficiencies for Members' consideration and comment. The proposals detailed related specifically to a number of Authority-wide issues and the Directorate savings for 2014/15. Members were reminded that the report showed a projected three year savings requirement of £28.13m for the whole Authority.

An amended copy of the long list of proposed savings and efficiencies included in the report was tabled to Members at the Scrutiny meeting, which Mrs Aspinall explained was indicative of the current fluid situation of the proposals.

Members were advised that only the proposed savings for 2014/15 would be presented at that meeting, in order to focus the Members' views and suggestions. This would ensure the setting of a balanced budget for 2014/15 and ensure that a range of indicative savings of proposals were prioritised for further work to address financial shortfalls in future years. All Members were invited to give their views following the presentation of the proposals.

Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration and Planning, presented suggested savings for her Service Area, and outlined potential savings for 2014/15.

Suggested savings in relation to vacancy management and budget realignment were outlined, including the reduction of several posts across the Service Area, reduction of services such as training and marketing to Business Enterprise Support, reducing archiving and training within Countryside and Planning Services, and a restructure within Blackwood Miners' Institute. These suggested savings totalled £323,000, and Members were advised this amounted to half of the proposed savings for the Service Area for 2014/15.

Opportunities to increase income and possible operating efficiencies were outlined. These incorporated the streamlining of the Authority's industrial properties, increased income from visitor centres, Llancaiach Fawr and Blackwood Miners' Institute, and an increase in land charges. These suggested savings totalled £160,000.

Proposals to introduce new fees and charges were outlined. These included introducing a charge for pre-planning advice (already utilised by a number of Authorities), charges for car parking at country parks, and charges for invasive species monitoring and Local Development Plan monitoring. These suggested savings totalled £137,000.

Other savings were also suggested via the reduction of community regeneration projects and the reduction of the enhanced maintenance budget. These suggested savings totalled £95,000.

The overall suggested savings for the Regeneration and Planning Service Area for 2014/15 was £715,000. Further proposals for savings in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were highlighted, with possible service restructuring and the reduction or closing of some facilities, which could result in some possible redundancies. Service reviews would also be carried out in line with benchmarking data.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Service for her presentation and invited Members to comment on the proposed savings.

Members discussed the suggested savings in relation to vacancy management and clarified a number of items within the presentation with the Head of Service. Members raised concerns that the reduction in posts could impact on staff morale and queried the need for a review of working practices. The Head of Service clarified that many of these reductions would occur through natural wastage and that a restructure of the Service Area would lead to joined-up teams and shared working practices, with services to the public maintained throughout.

Members also referenced the suggested savings via increased income and operating efficiencies and discussed plans for the Authority's industrial property portfolio and the profitability of the Authority's various tourist facilities.

Members discussed the suggested savings in relation to the implementation of new fees and charges. It was queried whether the income that could be produced from introducing a charge for pre-planning advice was negligible when compared to the amount of work required, and it was clarified that this was dependant on the type of advice provided and that it was a very popular service in other parts of the country. It was explained that the income figure was a conservative estimate and could potentially be higher than the figure provided.

Members queried the suggested introduction of a charge for car parking at country parks. The estimated income was £85,000 and Members sought clarification as to whether this was the resulting profit following the installation of pay and display machines and what financial year this income could be applied to. Members queried the capital investment involved in the proposal and determined that further specific information was required in relation to this suggested saving.

Members also discussed the other suggested savings in the presentation, particularly the reduction of the enhanced maintenance budget. The suggested savings target was 50% and Members determined that further information was required in relation to how this suggested saving would be achieved.

Mark S. Williams, Head of Community and Leisure Services, presented a list of suggested savings for 2014/15 for each section of his Service Area, and Members were invited to comment following the presentation of suggested savings for each section.

The first element of suggested savings detailed a number of efficiencies relating to Parks and Bereavement Services, including the deletion of one post upon retirement, an increasing of income, and reductions and frequency amendments to some services. These suggested savings totalled £364,700.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in the proposal suggesting the ceasing of management grants to Bowls Clubs and splash pools within the Authority, as he is a member of Bargoed Bowls Club.

Members queried if residents would be affected by the removal of the grant to Bowls Clubs and the Head of Service confirmed that these grants were historic and not based on a logical allocation system. Members also discussed the maintenance of splash pools within the Authority. Following discussion regarding these grants, Members requested that further information be provided in relation to this particular savings proposal.

Discussion ensued in relation to grass cutting, the closure of two cricket squares, the deletion of the January cutting of highway hedges and embankments, and the phased removal of flowerbeds. Members queried the frequency of hedge and embankment cuts and it was confirmed that there was no cut at certain times of the year due to regulations regarding the nesting process of various wildlife.

Members queried the suggestion to remove the enhanced weekend park cleansing service, and raised concerns that this could potentially lead to broken glass left over the weekend, which could pose a danger to the public. Members queried whether the local community could be engaged in a park cleansing program but it was ascertained that this would not be a sustainable option on a regular basis. Members therefore requested further information in relation to reviewing the weekend park cleansing service.

The next element of suggested savings related to the Waste Strategy and Operations section and suggested an increase in some charges and the introduction of new charges, the

reconfiguration of working practices, vacancy management and service reduction. Members' attention was particularly directed to the suggested closure of some or all of the public conveniences in the Authority, a ban on vans and trailers disposing of waste at civic amenity sites due to increasing costs, charges for garden waste collections, and the closure of the Rhymney Civic Amenity site. These suggested savings totalled between £926,000 and £1.021 million, dependant on the level of proposals introduced.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding several of these proposals. Members discussed the suggested saving regarding public conveniences and requested further information regarding this proposal.

Members were concerned that a van and trailer ban at amenity sites would lead to an increase in illegal tipping and queried how this restriction would be monitored at civic amenity sites. Members queried the possibility of introducing a small charge for vans and trailers as an alternative measure and requested more specific information relating to this proposal.

Members discussed the proposed saving in relation to the introduction of charges for garden waste collection services, and requested further information in relation to this. Members discussed the suggested proposal to charge for all replacement and new issue waste containers and sought clarification regarding the current procedure for issuing bins. Members raised a number of concerns and requested further information regarding this suggested saving. Members also requested further information in relation to the proposal to introduce double shift working for mechanical sweepers.

The next element of suggested savings related to Sport and Leisure Services and suggested management restructuring (which had already been agreed by Members), the introduction of new pricing structures, increasing energy efficiency in leisure centres, centralising the Admin section, and closing the café in Caerphilly Leisure Centre. These suggested savings totalled £358,000.

Members discussed a number of the proposals, and it was confirmed that the proposed Admin restructure would probably lead to the reduction of one post. Members queried whether alternative provisions could be made in order to keep the café in Caerphilly Leisure Centre open. The Head of Service explained that it was now the only facility of this type in any of the leisure centres and that it would be more beneficial to close the café and utilise the extra space for increased leisure facilities. This would concentrate efforts on the Authority's aim of encouraging more people to participate in regular exercise activities.

The final part of the suggested savings related to Building Cleaning Services and it was proposed that a Direct Service Organisation (DSO) contract efficiency be introduced, which would involve the section starting the financial year with a negative budget and then generating monies throughout the year in order to move to a positive balance. These suggested savings totalled £50,000.

The overall suggested saving for the Community and Leisure Services area was between £1.699 million and £1.794 million. Further proposals for savings in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were highlighted, with further reduction of services and the possible closure of additional civic amenity sites and leisure centres.

The Head of Service was thanked for his thorough presentation and the Chairman confirmed that clarification and feedback on a number of the savings proposals would be required for a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Terry Shaw, Head of Engineering Services, then presented a list of suggested savings for 2014/15 for each section of his Service Area.

The first element of suggested savings detailed a number of efficiencies relating to the Highway Operations Group. The suggested savings included cuts to the work programme

involving structures and retaining walls, reductions to the consultancy structure service level agreement, ceasing of the special works programme, the removal of funding support for Christmas festive lighting to towns and villages, and budget realignment in relation to private finance initiatives. These suggested savings totalled £270,000.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposal to cease local authority support to Christmas lighting in towns and villages. At this point, Councillor C. Elsbury declared an interest in this proposal as he advises a company that could potentially pick up the contract for festive lighting. Councillor J. Bevan also declared an interest due to his involvement in a community council that receives festive lighting funding from the Authority.

Members also queried the proposal regarding cuts to the works programme involving structures and retaining walls, and queried whether this cut would end up costing the Authority more money. The Head of Service confirmed the level of cuts being considered was only around 10% at the moment and that each case would be considered on its own merits.

The next element of suggested savings related to the Transportation Engineering Group and proposed the review of cleansing and repair operations to the Authority's bus shelters and stations. A suggested saving via the review of off-street parking charges had already been completed, and there were also proposals to review school crossing patrols and increase fares for the Connect2 Flexible Transport Service. These suggested savings totalled £101,100.

Members discussed the current arrangements in relations to the cleansing of bus stations and the impact of the suggested savings on the cleansing programme. Members also queried the review of school crossing patrols and it was confirmed that crossing points would be reviewed as the guards retired.

The final element of suggested savings related to the Engineering Projects Group (EPG) and addressed a review of the EPG contributions generated through income. These suggested savings totalled £40,000 and Members queried the funding arrangements in relation to the EPG.

The overall suggested saving for Engineering Services was £411,100. Further proposals for savings in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were highlighted, with further reductions and a review of services proposed within the Highway Operations Group and Transportation Engineering Group.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Service for his presentation.

Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, made the final presentation of the evening to Members and provided a list of suggested savings for 2014/15 for each section of his Service Area.

The first element of suggested savings related to proposed savings in the Environmental Health, Community Safety, Licensing and Registration sections. The proposals included increased pest control income, the introduction of a fee for household rat treatments, the ceasing of crucial crew, reduction of community safety vehicles, and an increase in licensing and registration fees. These suggested savings totalled £74,000.

Members queried the proposed introduction of a fee for household rat treatments and requested further information in relation to this suggested saving. Members also queried the proposed increase in licensing fees and requested further information in relation to this.

The next element of suggested savings related to proposed savings in the Catering section and proposed an annual increase in the price of school meals, staff restaurant prices and catering function charges. These suggested savings totalled £43,800. Members clarified the current prices and the impact of a price increase on current tariffs.

The overall suggested saving for the Public Protection area was £117,800. Further proposals for savings in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were highlighted, with the possibility of further fee increases across Public Protection, the deletion of trainee posts and the potential for flexible productivity working, and the reduction or withdrawal of some services following review.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Service for his presentation.

Members fully considered the reports, accompanying list of efficiencies and presentations from the Heads of Service and identified a number of proposals requiring further specific information from the Heads of Service. It was agreed that Members would reconvene at a special Scrutiny meeting in January 2014 for further consideration of the proposed savings and efficiencies.

The meeting closed at 18.56 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2014, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON MONDAY, 16TH DECEMBER 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor W. David - Chairman
Councillor D.W.R. Preece - Deputy Chairman

Councillors:

P. Bevan, W. David, H.R. Davies, C. Durham, C. Gordon, D. Havard, M.P. James,
G. Johnston, D.W.R. Preece, J. Pritchard, D. Rees, J.E Roberts, R. Saralis,

Also Present:

Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure: Mrs R. Passmore.

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), K. Cole (Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), T. Maher (Assistant Director, Planning and Strategy), G. Evans (Senior Manager Library Services), T. Cunnick (Manager Community, Youth Service and Adult), Gareth Hardacre (Head of People Management & Development) J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Co-opted Members: Mr. M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan), Mr. A. Farina-Childs (Parent Governor).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. M. Gray and Mrs G.D. Oliver, together with Mrs. A. Goss (Parent Governor) and Mrs. P.J. Ireland (NUT).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Martyn James' queried a requirement to declare an interest, as his wife is a teacher. Mr Jones clarified that as schools budgets would not be discussed, a declaration would not be required.

There were no declarations of interest received at the start or during the course of the meeting.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

2. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2014/15 - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

S. Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive introduced the report and accompanying presentation, which detailed the proposed savings and efficiencies for those areas subject to review by the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee. The report provided an overview of the savings requirement for the Council for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17. The savings relate specifically to a number of Authority Wide issues and Directorate savings for 2014/15.

T. Maher, Assistant Director Planning & Strategy, presented the report. Members were asked to note that the Criteria of the Directorate is to raise standards and ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are met, to protect 'Public facing' services', protect jobs and to deliver value for money services. T Maher presented Members with proposed savings that could be made through the realignment of Budget. The savings would be achieved mainly through matching future budgets to with required future spending needs. The budgets identified were the Teacher Performance Management Budget, Home to School Transport, Disclosure Barring Service, Out of County provision and Community Education. Members were informed that the savings were deliverable, would have a low impact to service provision and would provide £540,000 towards the required savings for 2014/15.

Members queried the impact on School Support, with the reduction in Performance Management budget. Officers clarified that there had been an under-spend in the budget for a number of years; hence it was being offered as a low impact saving for 2014/15.

A member requested further information on the impact anticipated for the reduction in the Home to School transport budget. Officers explained that colleagues in the Environment Directorate had recently retendered a number of contracts and had achieved savings due to increased economies of scale and greater market competition. The impact of future increases in fuel prices had been built into the new contracts.

Clarification was sought on the proposal to make savings through the reduction of budget for DBS checks. Officers explained that the savings resulted from a reduction in staff turnover, which was expected to remain constant for 2014/15. Members were assured that staff will not be required to pay for the checks themselves, the budget will not impact on services and it does allow for some additional movement.

Members discussed the level of impact the Out of County Provision budget reduction would have on the services. Officers explained that the pupils with the most complex needs might need support out of the Borough. This support was very expensive, however, with better pupil tracking there has been a significant reduction in the requirement to seek Out of County Placements. Members were assured that sufficient budget provision remained for any Out of County Placements needed.

Clarification was sought on the savings proposal for the Youth Club in Oakdale. Officers confirmed that this was allocated for rental costs for the Youth Club in Oakdale but this service had been taken over by a Voluntary Group. Members were informed that the Voluntary Sector has access to additional funding, not available to local authorities and that the provision in Oakdale would continue.

T. Maher and K. Cole presented Members with the proposed savings to the Directorate through Vacancy Management/Service Reviews. Members were presented with a list of posts that have been vacant for a time, the systems and collaborative efforts that have been implemented which has lead to the posts no longer being required.

Members highlighted that the information contained in the presentation was different to tables included in the officer's report. Officers acknowledged these comments and explained that the figures had been expressed differently in the presentation but the totals remained the same. Officers also underlined that all savings proposals are currently work in progress and could be subject to change.

Concerns were raised about posts not being filled and clarification was sought as to the impact on pupils and service delivery. Members were informed that there has been little impact to services due to a review of systems, the positive impact of the EAS and the implementation of a more sophisticated tracking system which has assisted to reduce service duplication and bridge gaps in support. Head teachers had provided positive feedback as a result of this approach.

Members raised concerns about the proposed decrease to the budget allocated for Special Educational Needs and queried the impact on services and capability of Teaching Assistants to provide appropriate levels of support. Officers clarified that the budget has not historically been spent and Teaching Assistants were proving to provide improved outcomes. Members were informed that feedback from Head Teachers suggested that they are happy with this approach and confident in the level of support provided by staff.

T. Maher and G. Evans presented Members with a detailed overview of the proposed savings for the Library Service through service reduction. The proposed savings amounted to £57,000 and would be achieved through reductions in the Libraries Subscriptions Budget and Libraries Book Fund.

Members discussed their concerns at the proposed budget cuts and suggested an increase in late return fees. Members noted that the Council is part of a scheme, which allows books to be shared across other Local Authorities, which should help minimise the impact on services. Officers highlighted that late fees were reviewed in the past and were found to offer little additional revenue but may result in deterring Library users.

Officers summarised the report and presentation and reiterated that the proposed savings for 2014/15 have a low impact to services. Members were asked to note that in the New Year, a report would be provided for their consideration, which would outline future, more difficult savings proposals for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The meeting closed at 18:30 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2014, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WELSH QUALITY HOUSING STANDARD)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
(SIRHOWY ROOM)
ON THURSDAY 9TH JANUARY 2014 AT 5:00PM**

PRESENT:

Ms. A. Lewis - Chairman
Mrs D. Price - Vice Chairman

TASK GROUP MEMBERS:

Ms. L. Ackerman, C. Davies, R.T. Davies, G. Henderson, K. James, G. Jones, Mrs S. Jones, Ms. A. Lewis, Mrs A. McConnell, J. Moore and K.V. Reynolds.

Officers: N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151), P. Davy (Head of Programmes), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer) and E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from C. Mann.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms. A. Lewis, Mr C. Davies, Ms. G. Henderson, Mrs S. Jones, Mrs A. McConnell and Mr J. Moore as Council Tenants declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in the agenda item.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN FOR THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

The report outlined potential savings/efficiencies on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and sought Members comments on the proposals.

N. Scammell Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 introduced the report and referred Members to Appendix B of the report, previously circulated to the Task Group on the 5th December 2013, which listed the potential savings against the Housing Revenue Account only. The Task Group were advised that there was little flexibility given the severity of the savings to be made. They were reminded that no decisions had been made at this stage and their comments and observations would be taken into account along with the other consultation responses across all service areas when Cabinet deliberated the budget

recommendations to be made to Council.

S. Jones on behalf of tenants read the following statement:

“First of all we would like to thank the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for asking us for our observations, we would also like to thank Nicole Scammell for doing the seminar, it has helped us understand the difficult decisions Councillors have to make.

These are the observations of the Tenant members of the Task Group.

The environmental spend of £10.5m would not be a lot on its own but could be match funded to create bigger budgets to expand, promoting healthy lifestyles and well-being. If the Council chooses to go down the road of delaying the environmental spend it will lose the window of opportunity to improve these communities and the residents who live in them. It is not all about kitchens and bathrooms it is about giving residents what some people would call a life line, we have seen how the WHQS program has inspired tenants pride in their homes, we think it is important for this inspiration to come into our communities so that tenants and residents can come together to improve their lives and communities. Caerphilly County Borough has some of the poorest and most deprived communities in Wales and they need to be supported, especially as the Welfare Reform changes have had their affect and all the cut backs that local authorities have to make. How will the council engage with tenants and residents and address the social and economic challenges within communities?

In October 2011 the addendum document was agreed stating the Council’s promise to deliver WHQS by 2019/20. The result of the ballot process in February 2012 showed that the tenants decided to put their trust in the Council and voted to keep the Council as their landlord. If CCBC go ahead with the proposals you would break that promise you made in the addendum, and therefore lose the trust of the tenants and residents.”

The Chair thanked the Tenant members for their statement and observations and comments on the statement and the list of savings proposals were welcomed.

The Head of Programmes appreciated the impact that the proposal to defer the environment works would have but confirmed that it was the phasing of the work alongside the property improvements that would be affected and a sequential approach would be adopted. Officers acknowledged the Task Groups concerns that by doing so newly formed community links might be lost as the environmental programme was an integral part of those links. The Officer confirmed that the deferral of the programme would take the completion deadline beyond the target 2019/20. However the Council now faced a dramatically different financial position and must look at all possible options in order to achieve the savings required. The original proposals as detailed in the Offer Document and Addendum had been dependent upon input from the ‘General Fund’ and the position of the General Fund had been dramatically changed by the impact of the savings requirements. The commitments had been made based on assumptions that were correct at the time the business plan had been approved prior to the ballot, however that position was now very different.

A Member expressed the concern that the program could be subject to further deferrals should the financial position of the Council change again and this would result in a loss of trust between the tenants and the Council.

A Member sought clarification as to Welsh Governments position in relation to the failure to meet the specified deadline. The Officer confirmed that Welsh Government were aware of the position facing all local authorities. The backstop date of 2020 to achieve WHQS had been set by the Minister, the Council had entered into the commitment to deliver the improvements based on the position at the time of the ballot and the assumptions going forward had not anticipated the severity of the cuts now being sought.

The Member was of the opinion that the WHQS budget should have been ring-fenced and

should not have been considered at part of the savings requirements and felt that a window of opportunity to engage with tenants / residents to benefit the community would be missed if the works were to be deferred.

A Members sought clarification with regard to the Offer Document and made specific reference to Pages 4 and 5 of the document which referenced it as a 'legally binding' document and referenced Page 6 of the document which listed £13m as the budget for environmental works and queried the disparity with the £10.5m now allocated.

The Officer confirmed that of the £13m referenced, £2m had been secured for other assets including the rationalisation and improvement of the garage stock and advised that this commitment had been secured and approved. £50,000pa each had been allocated for the Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety initiatives leaving £10.5m for the remaining environment programme. The environment programme focused on external works on the housing estates such as footpath schemes, landscaping improvements, street lighting, play areas, etc.

The Officer confirmed that the reference to a legally binding document referred to the difference between the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and the Council. Had the stock been transferred then the Offer Document would have become the legally binding contract between the newly formed RSL and the Council, in the case of the retention of the housing stock, the Addendum being the statement of the commitment of the Council. The Officer advised that the vast majority of the commitments made within the Addendum would continue, the only change being proposed was the deferment of the environmental programme.

The Acting Director for Corporate Services advised that the Task Group could consider the option to opt out of the 'general fund' funding element, then the delivery of the environmental works could remain intact by funding through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). However in doing so additional savings would need to be secured from the HRA, which would mean a reduction in service delivery. The Task Group would need to consider their priorities and if the environmental works were considered to be the main priority then this would be an option. Unfortunately this would mean that the rest of the housing services would need to be drastically cut in order to replace the £10m. A list of service cuts would need to be drawn up for the Task Group to consider and prioritise and they would also need to be mindful of the affects that Direct Benefit Payments and under-occupancy could have on the HRA. It was noted that the whole authority had worked hard in order to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform. Further savings could be brought back to the Task Group, which would allow the HRA to borrow more, however they would be at a cost to other parts of the Housing service.

A Member queried if this would mean that internal works would cease in order to keep the environment works going. The Officer confirmed that if environmental works were considered to be the priority then that was an option for consideration.

Clarification was sought as to whether the MRA allowance would be affected by the failure to meet the completion deadline of 2019/20.

Officers confirmed that Welsh Government had been advised and a response was awaited. It was noted that other authorities had already stated that they would be unable to meet their completion targets and were still in receipt of the MRA allowance. Officers advised that they would work to secure the same treatment for this authority. Welsh Government had been asked for their view about deferring the environmental programme and they were aware that the 'general fund' was subsidising the HRA. It was noted that other bids, such as the 21st Century Schools program, were also in a similar position and now subject to review.

Officers confirmed that negotiations between Welsh Government and the Treasury were ongoing in respect of the HRAS systems and Caerphilly would consider its position along with that of the other authorities as all would have to sign up to the buy out. This would depend on the detail of the final proposal and whether this would equate to actual savings could not be

determined at this point.

A Member acknowledged the representations of tenants and thanked them for their observations. The Member expressed his concern at the current position facing the whole of the public sector in terms of the level of cuts required of them by Government. Unfortunately the severity of the cuts had left this authority with very little choice or flexibility going forward. The Task Group was advised that this authority was endeavouring to secure savings that had the lowest possible impact on the delivery of services and had made a commitment to its staff that compulsory redundancies would only be considered as a last resort. This unprecedented situation could not have been foreseen when the business plan for the WHQS programme was established and the proposal to defer the environment works was a option with the lowest impact on service delivery, however if there were any other areas of the HRA that could be explored in order to secure the proposed savings they would be considered.

A Member asked that consideration be given to reducing Councillor expenses or reducing casual mileage allowances as options going forward and was advised that they had already been put forward for consideration. It was noted that many elected Members were opting not to take the 1% pay rise awarded to them by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The Task Group were advised of the more drastic savings being made by other authorities and noted that through its sound financial planning going forward Caerphilly was not yet in this position. However £14.5m of savings still had to be achieved in 2014/15 and it was essential that every avenue be explored. Every proposal put forward was under consideration and every single saving would be looked at, nothing would be left off the table. It was noted that all comments made during the consultation period would be included in a report to Cabinet who would make its recommendations to Council who would set the final budget. The Task Group were advised that all elected Members had taken up office with a view to improve and expand communities and were now faced with making some difficult decisions which would impact on the communities they serve.

Clarification was sought as to what alternative savings could be proposed. Officers confirmed that this would require further investigation as it would affect other aspects of the housing service which had already made significant savings. It would be extremely difficult to make further savings without having a direct impact on service delivery.

Members agreed that no one could have anticipated the level of savings to be made and acknowledged that the cuts required would be widespread and far-reaching. Officers reminded Members that the proposal was for a deferment not the cancellation of the environmental works.

A Member requested that consideration be given to bringing more works in house rather than subcontracting.

The Head of Programmes confirmed that the original programme had planned that half of the work would be carried out in-house and half through contractors. A procurement process had commenced and the tenders evaluated before Christmas. The resulting evaluations had raised some issues in terms of value for money and affordability and were such that Officers felt unable to proceed with the contract award until a due diligence was undertaken. One potential option would be to bring more of the works in-house, however this could not happen over night and would need to be properly investigated and managed. Before bringing further works in-house careful consideration would need to be given on ensuring that there is the capacity to do so and that it would be as cost competitive. Unfortunately this review would mean some slippage in the works programme. A further report would need to be brought to the Task Group for consideration but this would take time to prepare.

Clarification was sought as to the timescales involved and the Officer confirmed that this would require approximately 6-8 weeks in order to allow for further investigation, the preparation of the report and consultation process. However this would be done as soon as

possible in order to minimise slippage.

A Member expressed the concern that the programme had already experienced some slippage and had it not done so the funding for the environmental works would have already been borrowed and the works commenced.

The Acting Director of Corporate Services confirmed that as no borrowing had taken place this was not the case and even if the works had commenced this did not mean that they could not be suspended.

Tenant Members agreed that task facing the elected Members was a difficult one and they appreciated the difficult times ahead. However they needed to represent the views of tenants and the importance they attached to the environmental works programme and how vital they considered meeting the WHQS requirements by 2019/20. The benefits to communities were already being seen and the communities would be hard hit by the proposed savings for which they were unprepared. The importance to the tenants that the commitments made within the Addendum be realised was emphasised and that the WHQS would be achieved on time.

The Chair directed Members back to Appendix B of the Officer's report and requested their comments and observations on the savings listed.

Members raised concerns in relation to HRA4 - re-phasing of telecare upgrading in sheltered schemes and assurances were sought as to any impact on the service provided. Officers confirmed that the upgrade related to the replacement of the pull-cord system with a pendant system and the renewal of cabling. The re-phasing would have no detriment to the service provided and related to sheltered housing schemes only.

The Chair thanked the Acting Director of Corporate Services for her attendance and contributions at this evenings meeting and for the budget seminar, which provided the Task Group with a greater understanding of the issues involved. The Chair confirmed that the comments and observations of the Task Group would be included in further reports to Cabinet and Council as part of the consultation process.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2014.

The meeting closed at 18:03pm

CHAIRMAN



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY, 20TH JANUARY 2014 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies – Chairman
Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth – Vice Chairman

Councillors:

J. Bevan, C.J. Cuss, C. Elsbury, Ms E. Forehead, R.W. Gough, A.G. Higgs, Ms J.G. Jones, S. Kent, M.J. Prew, Mrs D. Price and Mrs E. Stenner.

Cabinet Members:

K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services) and T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering).

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), P. Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), G. Williams (Monitoring Officer and Principal Solicitor), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer).

Also present:

Councillors J.A. Pritchard and J. Taylor.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, R.T. Davies and N. Dix.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in item 4(1) – Local Government Settlement 2014/15 – Environment Directorate Savings Proposals. Details are minuted with the respective item.

During the course of the meeting, Councillors J. Bevan and Mrs D. Price declared an interest in an item under discussion. Details are minuted with the respective item.

Councillor J.A. Pritchard attended the meeting to speak on the report and declared an interest in an item under discussion. Details are minuted with the respective item.

3. MINUTES – 12TH DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 3, page nos. 1 - 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2014/15 – ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive, introduced the report to Members and summarised the situation to date. At a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 10th December 2013, during which potential savings proposals for the Directorate of the Environment 2014/15 were presented by each of the Heads of Service, Members expressed a wish to consider a number of the items in greater detail at a future meeting early in 2014. The purpose of the latest meeting and report was therefore to allow further scrutiny of these proposals. It was emphasised to Members that the process was still at the consultation stage, with a meeting with the trade unions scheduled for 28th January 2014, and thus there would be no definitive decisions taken as yet.

Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in the proposal suggesting the ceasing of management grants to bowls clubs and splash pools within the Authority, as he is a member of Bargoed Bowls Club. It was determined that his interest could be viewed as prejudicial and Councillor Davies was therefore advised to leave the meeting during discussion of this item.

It was determined that this proposal would be discussed first to allow Councillor Davies to participate in the rest of the meeting, and Councillor Davies left the room during discussion of this item. Councillor Mrs E.A. Aldworth presided as Chair during consideration of this item.

Mark S. Williams, Head of Community and Leisure Services, presented further information relating to suggested savings for 2014/15 for his Service Area, and an amended copy of the presentation was tabled at the meeting.

The first element of suggested savings related to the proposal to cease provision of management grants to four bowls clubs (Bedwas and Trethomas, Gilfach, Machen and Bargoed) and the Senghenydd Splash Pad. This would bring about a projected saving of £12,429, which was above the Medium Term Financial Plan target of £10,000 for 2014/15.

It was explained that the grants to bowls clubs were historical agreements established by predecessor authorities and that the amount of grant varied between each bowls club. Members were advised that Senghenydd Splash Pad had been installed against the advice of Officers several years ago, based on the Authority's experience of operating a splash pool at Morgan Jones Park. The original projected business plan for the Senghenydd Splash Pad had indicated a requirement of £2000 per annum but this soon grew to £6000 per annum. The Head of Service advised that there was an arrangement with ice-cream vendors in relation to Morgan Jones Park, and this could be a future potential source of funding for the Senghenydd Splash Pad, should interested parties wish to investigate this further. He also suggested that the Senghenydd Community Partnership could hire the facility for parties.

The savings proposals in relation to the management grants included removing the grants altogether, reducing the grants and introducing equal treatment for all the bowls clubs and Splash Pad, or achieving £10,000 saving in 2014/15 by reducing the grant from £12,429 to £2429, and then phasing out the grants altogether in 2015/16.

Discussion ensued in relation to the bowls clubs before Councillor J. Taylor was invited to speak on behalf of the Aber Valley Partnership in relation to the proposal to cease the provision of a management grant to the Senghenydd Splash Pad. Councillor Taylor informed those present that he had received advice from the Monitoring Officer and as a result would be leaving the meeting following his presentation.

Councillor Taylor addressed the Scrutiny Committee, stating that he was disappointed in the claim that the Senghenydd Splash Pad was installed against Officer advice and felt that the report was therefore misleading. He referred to the funding origins of the project, stating that it was developed via a community partnership with CCBC and other organisations and that the project was established with a view to replace an existing paddling pool.

Councillor Taylor offered the minutes of the meetings of the Aber Valley Partnership to evidence the details behind the partnership, and stated that he did not think the suggestions to utilise an ice-cream vendor or to hire out the facility would be viable. Councillor Taylor stated that the Splash Pad was one of the few facilities available in the area for young children and appealed to the Scrutiny Committee to take these considerations into account.

Councillor Taylor was thanked for his presentation and he left the meeting.

Members queried the details of the funding agreement between the Council and the community partnership. Officers confirmed that this was originally the remit of the former Education and Leisure department back in 2006 and that funding agreements and departmental responsibility for the Splash Pad had subsequently changed over the resulting years. The Acting Deputy Chief Executive stated that the partnership had been given a grant of £2,000 but the Head of Service at that time withdrew the grant. The grant was reinstated and it was agreed that for the year 2011-2012, a grant of £6,000 would be provided. However, this would be on the receipt of detailed information relating to the expenditure incurred.

Following detailed consideration and discussion of a number of possible options, the Scrutiny Committee, by a show of hands, RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Senghenydd Splash Pad proposal be withdrawn from the list of suggested savings pending a review of its funding by Officers, and that the £2429 surplus medium term financial plan (MTFP) saving be divided between the four bowls clubs for 2014/15.

Councillor D.T. Davies returned to the meeting and resumed his position as Chair.

The next element of suggested savings detailed the proposed introduction of charges for garden waste collection. This measure had already been introduced in a number of other Authorities and the charge would bring about a projected saving of £80,000 per annum, although this figure could be higher or lower. The Head of Service acknowledged that the scheme would be difficult to administer and that the success of the system was dependant on socio-economics within the area.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, unanimously RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the proposal to introduce charges for garden waste collection be withdrawn from the list of suggested savings.

The next element of suggested savings related to the introduction of double shift working for mechanical sweepers, which would bring about a projected saving of £73,000. It was confirmed that this proposal would be subject to a period of consultation with trade unions. The Head of Service explained that double shift working was a pattern of working currently

utilised by the Authority's road sweepers, and consisted of three consecutive working days per week of 12.5 hours each day, within daytime hours.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the savings proposal to introduce double shift working be supported.

The next element of suggested savings related to the suggested closure of some/all of the public conveniences in the Authority. Members were reminded of the location of the 9 public conveniences within the Authority, these being Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach, Nelson, Caerphilly Tourist Information Centre, Caerphilly Bus Station, Blackwood Bus Station, Fleur de Lys, Newbridge and Risca. The Head of Service explained that the potential savings ranged between £24,000 (if Nelson, Newbridge and Fleur de Lys public conveniences were closed) and £119,000 (if all 9 conveniences were closed). Members were informed that if Caerphilly Tourist Information Centre public convenience were to remain open, there would be a need to redesign the facilities in order to alter disabled access and reduce current anti-social behaviour. The savings proposals included closing all 9 public conveniences, closing Nelson, Newbridge and Fleur de Lys public conveniences, or choosing to close a different amount and retaining the ones in the major town centres.

Members queried arrangements relating to the Public Convenience Grant Scheme, which encourages local businesses to make their toilet facilities available for free public use, and clarified current staffing arrangements regarding the cleaning of the public conveniences. The Head of Service clarified that Nelson, Newbridge and Fleur de Lys public conveniences had been identified as potential sites for closure due to their location within a smaller town or village location. Members recognised the importance of public conveniences within town centre but acknowledged that savings had to be made. The Head of Service clarified that enquiries would be made in regards to selling the buildings if the public conveniences were closed.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the suggested savings option to close three public conveniences, namely Nelson, Newbridge and Fleur de Lys, be approved.

The next element of suggested savings related to the proposal to charge for all replacement and new issue household waste containers. This would bring about a projected saving of £63,000. Members were reminded of the current policy allowing for the free replacement of recycling and residual bins. There would be some work required to the Authority's computer systems in order to implement the charge, and proposed charges included £25 per bin, £5 per food caddy, £2 for garden waste re-usable bags (if the charge for garden waste collection was not approved) and £2 for 25 plastic refuse sacks.

Members clarified the existing procedure for issuing replacement bins with the Head of Service and there was discussion regarding the issue of stolen and damaged bins. Members raised concerns that introducing a charge for bins would result in aggravation for residents and create an administrative burden for the Authority.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the proposal to charge for replacement bins and food caddies be withdrawn, and that a charge be introduced for replacement garden waste bags and plastic bin bags.

The next element of suggested savings related to the proposal to introduce a van and trailer ban at civic amenity sites, with a projected saving of £50,000. The Head of Service informed Members that the sites were currently experiencing abuse with regards to the dumping of trade waste and there was evidence that this was originating from tradesmen from neighbouring county boroughs. Members had previously queried whether a charge could be introduced instead of a ban and it was confirmed that this would need to be at least £50 for a car-derived van or small trailer and at least £100 for a larger van or pick up truck or a large

trailer. Members were advised that the options available were to keep the current civic amenity arrangements, introduce a van ban using barrier systems or introduce a charging regime using a barrier system.

Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of introducing a charging regime and the Head of Service highlighted potential problems associated with this option. He stated that his preferred option would be a van and trailer ban, as charging would present a number of implementation difficulties. Members raised queries in relation to potential fly tipping and queried a number of alternatives to a van and trailer ban with the Head of Service.

Following detailed discussion, the Scrutiny Committee, by a show of hands, RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that a charging regime for vans and trailers at civic amenity sites, using a barrier system, be introduced.

The next element of suggested savings related to the proposal to review the weekend park cleansing service, with a projected saving of £10,000. Members were informed that a number of parks within the Authority were currently cleansed on weekends between 7am and 11am, which incorporated significant on-costs relating to contractual overtime and travelling. Proposed savings options included the complete cleansing programme being discontinued on weekends, or for park rangers to cleanse the parks later on in the day within the summer months.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding this proposal and Members queried the possibility of park rangers cleansing the parks in the mornings instead. It was confirmed that this was not possible due to park activities taking place in the afternoon and that not all parks within the Authority utilised park rangers. Members also queried the possibility of amending staff working patterns to ensure the cleansing of parks over the weekends, and the Head of Service confirmed that this was not an option due to the impact it would have on other areas of the service, including an operational impact on sports pitches. Members reiterated their concerns that a reduced programme of cleaning could potentially lead to broken glass being left over the weekend. The Head of Service outlined the protocol regarding emergency cleansing and also referenced the Pride in Your Pitch scheme, which engages with local sports clubs and encourages and enables them to take greater ownership of the condition of their pitches.

Following detailed discussion, the Scrutiny Committee, by a show of hands, unanimously RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the arrangements to review the weekend park cleansing service be withdrawn and that the current arrangements be retained.

Members then discussed a query raised by Councillor J. Bevan relating to the proposed closure of Rhymney Civic Amenity Centre. Councillor Bevan acknowledged that whilst the site was not as popular as the other amenity centres, nevertheless it was still in use, and he requested that this recommendation be reconsidered. Members raised concerns that the closure of the site could lead to an increase in fly-tipping, and the Head of Service suggested that the site could possibly be retained with reduced operating hours and the loss of one post.

Following detailed discussion, the Scrutiny Committee RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the proposal to close Rhymney Civic Amenity Centre be withdrawn, and that the site remain open with reduced operating hours.

Councillor J.A. Pritchard was then invited to speak in relation to the proposal to close the cafeteria at Caerphilly Leisure Centre. She declared an interest as a service user of the cafeteria and as a result was advised by the Democratic Services Manager to leave the meeting following her presentation.

Councillor Pritchard addressed the Scrutiny Committee and stated that she was anxious to convey how many people used the cafeteria and how valued it was. A petition was currently in circulation, with users also intending to write to the Chief Executive to oppose the closure.

Councillor Pritchard informed Members that the cafeteria meant a lot to users, including a place for people to chat, support workers to meet their clients and for older people to have access to a hot meal. Councillor Pritchard also emphasised the link to exercise classes at the leisure centre and referenced the benefit of the cafeteria to users' social and mental well being.

Councillor Pritchard suggested that various options could be introduced in order to address the losses of the cafeteria, including raising prices, looking at subsidisation or putting the cafeteria out to franchise or social enterprising options. In summarising, Councillor Pritchard requested that the proposal to close the cafeteria be examined in more detail.

Councillor Pritchard was thanked for her presentation and she left the meeting.

The Head of Community and Leisure Services then presented the saving proposal relating to the closure of the cafeteria, with a projected saving of £47,000 over two years. The Head of Service reiterated it was now the only leisure centre with a cafeteria and that the facility was non-profitable, with users sitting in the cafeteria for prolonged periods of time but buying very little food or drink. The cafeteria also required the replacement of equipment in the region of £130,000, and the closure had been endorsed by the Authority's Catering section. Members were advised that removing the cafeteria would result in an opportunity for an improved exercise facility and that a high quality vending machine could be installed in place of the cafeteria. The Head of Service added that when the exercise referral team were not using the space, it could be used as a viewing area or as an activity area.

Detailed discussion ensued and Members clarified the current staff arrangements, with the Head of Service confirming that the one full-time member of staff was potentially looking to retire and that the other part-time staff were also employed elsewhere in the Authority. Members also discussed how the proposals were communicated to cafeteria staff, and reiterated views of users in that the cafeteria appeared to be experiencing busy levels of trade. The Head of Service confirmed that the intended closure date was April 2014 and reiterated that the cafeteria was not making enough profit in order to sustain its operation. Members were also reminded that the room would still be available for community use, albeit with a vending machine.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the savings proposal to close the cafeteria at Caerphilly Leisure Centre be supported.

The Head of Service was thanked for his presentation.

Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration and Planning, presented further information relating to suggested savings for 2014/15 for her Service Area.

The first element of suggested savings related to the proposal to introduce car parking charges at country parks, which would generate an estimated income of £85,000. Members had previously queried the capital investment in relation to this proposal amongst concerns it would cancel out any projected income for 2014/15.

The Head of Service confirmed that the department already had 10 machines in stock which would be installed to implement the car parking charges, and that she was confident of the income amount that had been estimated. It was clarified that any investment would be met from the 2013/14 budget and that the estimated income for 2014/15 would be £85,000.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the proposal to implement car parking charges at country parks be supported.

The next element of suggested savings related to the reduction of the enhanced maintenance budget. Members had previously requested further information in relation to how this specific saving would be achieved. The Head of Service explained that the figures provided at the previous budget meeting were incorrect and that the proposed savings were £80,000 from a £97,000 budget, with £17,000 remaining.

The Head of Service clarified the meaning of the enhanced maintenance budget for Regeneration and Planning, explaining that it was a supplementary budget to the core maintenance budget. Members were informed that only around £5,000 of the enhanced maintenance budget had been spent in 2013/14 and that the enhanced maintenance spend varied from year to year. The reduction to the enhanced maintenance budget would therefore enable it to be allocated more proactively.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, unanimously RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the proposal to reduce the enhanced maintenance budget be supported.

The Head of Service was thanked for her presentation.

Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, made the final presentation of the evening to Members and presented further information relating to suggested savings for 2014/15 for his Service Area.

The first element of suggested savings proposed the introduction of a £20 fee for household rat treatments. This would generate a projected saving of £19,000. A concession of 50% would be granted for those on income support or guaranteed pension credit. It was confirmed that the cost of treatments in sheltered housing accommodation would be met by the Housing department.

Members discussed the proposed charge and raised concerns that it would have an adverse effect on people on low incomes. Members also feared that the charge would act as a deterrent to the reporting of rat infestations.

Following detailed discussion, the Scrutiny Committee determined that they could not support the proposal and, by a show of hands, unanimously RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the proposal to introduce a £20 fee for household rat treatments be withdrawn.

The final element of suggested savings related to a proposal to increase licensing fees by 5%. At this point, Councillors J. Bevan and D. Price declared an interest as they are Members of the Licensing Committee. They were advised by the Democratic Services Manager that the proposal under discussion related to taxi tariffs, which was not under the remit of the Licensing Committee, and therefore there was no requirement for them to declare an interest.

The suggested savings proposal to increase licensing fee income by 5% would generate a projected saving of £8,000. Members had asked for further information on tariffs, which is the fare that taxis charge customers. Members were advised that tariffs had not increased since 2010, and in a comparison of Tariff 1 fares, CCBC was placed 316th out of 364 local authorities, making their tariffs one of the lowest in the country. A comparison of Tariff 1 fares showed CCBC on £4.80, compared with Newport on £5.10, Rhondda Cynon Taff £5.20, Cardiff £5.40, Torfaen £4.80, Merthyr £4.50 and Blaenau Gwent £4.30. The Head of Service explained that there were plans to consult with the taxi trade on tariffs this year, should a decision be taken to increase fees.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposal and, by a show of hands, unanimously RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the proposal to increase licensing fees by 5% be supported.

The Head of Service was thanked for his presentation.

The meeting closed at 19.56 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2014, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN

COMMUNITY & TOWN COUNCIL CONSULTATION RESPONSES**1) Gelligaer Community Council**

Dear CCBC Members,

In relation to further consultation from CCBC of budget cuts, Members of Gelligaer Community Council have objected to the following items, as it is felt that it will have a detrimental effect on our local residents:

- Closure of the cafeteria at Caerphilly Leisure Centre - we object to the closure, as this facility is used by some of our disabled constituents and we therefore urge the Council to consider deferring this closure for 6 months, whilst preparations and enquiries are made in to exploring other possibilities, as in franchising or social enterprise.
- Closure of public toilets in Nelson - we object to the closure as some of our elderly residents use this facility out of necessity, when changing buses.

Regards,

Ceri Mortimer
Clerk to Gelligaer Community Council

2) Nelson Community Council**Nelson Public Conveniences – proposed closure:**

Dear Ms Morgan,

I thank you for your recent email communications regarding consultation on potential cost savings.

My council notes that one area being considered in respect of this is the closure of three of the less well used public toilets in the Borough and that this includes the toilets at Nelson Bus Station.

At a Special Meeting held on 13th February 2014, my council resolved to object to the proposal in the strongest possible terms. Whilst members appreciate that cost savings must be made, they consider the public toilets at Nelson to be a valuable and necessary resource.

It is to be expected that public toilets in the small towns and villages will be less well used than those in the larger towns of the borough, but that does not make their availability any less of a requirement.

The toilets at Nelson are situated in a prominent position in the centre of the village and are adjacent to the bus station, so we would expect them to be well used by residents and by those who use the bus station. It would be interesting to know whether the usage figures were considered as a percentage of the population of each town/village or merely the number of people using the facility.

I understand that the costs associated with providing the toilets at Nelson is around £9,000 per annum, which is minimal in the context of the overall budget. My council therefore requests that the closure of the public toilets at Nelson is not included in the current cost saving exercise.

Sincerely,

Alan Hoskins
Clerk to the Council

TRADE UNION CONSULTATION RESPONSES

1) Initial Trade Union feedback on the MTFP potential saving proposal for the reduction in the Casual mileage rate from 55p per mile to 45p per mile.

At the Corporate Services Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 8th January 2014 the joint Trade Unions were consulted on the list of potential budget Savings for 2014/15 to meet the target of £14.5m for that financial year.

One proposal on the list of whole authority savings is Casual Mileage Rate reduction from 55p to 45p (the HMRC rate). (Ref No AA2)

The joint Trade Unions expressed that their position was that this should not be considered as a potential saving for 2014/15 and should be removed from the list for that financial year. They proposed that if Elected Members were not willing to discount this area completely then this item should be moved into the potential savings for consultation in the financial year 2016/17.

The Trade Unions recognised that this would leave a gap in the proposed savings of £250k but commented that the current suggested rate of Council Tax at 2.35% was not a viable option.

The Trade Unions advised that neighbouring Authorities were setting more realistic percentage increases between 3.75%-4.25%. The Trade Unions suggested that this area needed reviewing and in doing so, any increase in Council Tax should resolve the shortfall for the 2014/15 financial year.

2) Trade Union feedback on the revised MTFP saving proposal for the reduction in the Casual mileage rate from 55p per mile to 50p per mile.

Unison - As per the collective Trade Union Agreement in 2011, it is recognised that the mileage rate was due for a review. Subsequently, on that basis Unison offer a proposal of accepting a reduction to a 50ppm rate, on the proviso that the then rate of 50ppm is protected for a 3 year period (April 2017). If the HMRC rate increases to over 50ppm then the subsequent changes are made. Following the protection period a full consultation process to take place to determine the mileage rate that is applied.

GMB - The GMB has consulted with our membership, on the reduction of mileage rate proposal. Our members felt strongly that the reduction to 50ppm is unreasonable. GMB believe that the authority should look at all services across the authority and consider the effect on the services, should the membership no longer wish to provide a car to attend the workplace.

Consideration should be especially given to the areas within Social Services that would be adversely affected by this reduction.

3) Unison response to the proposed closure of Caerphilly Leisure Centre Cafeteria

It is hard to see how the figure presented as a saving has been arrived at or what if any efforts to address the shortfall have taken place before looking to shut the service i.e. –

- Have you surveyed the customer base and asked what would encourage customers to use the service?
- What initiatives have been trailed to promote growth before considering closure?
- Have the last two years trading accounts been assessed to pinpoint potential areas for growth?
- Is it because the pricing structure is too low?

- What percentage of income was the original labour budget set at - obviously if your income drops this affects the % of labour against income achieved - this could reflect that your customer base is not happy with the service provided or the pricing structure is wrong.
- 20k energy saving – As there is no actual breakdown of this figure it's hard to see where or if this saving would be made. The area will still require heating - lighting and any power to vending machines will still be applicable.
- Staffing costs – these will still be carried by the Authority so will not constitute a saving.
- The centre is registered as a Rest centre and café staff trained in case of local emergencies such as flooding so the café facilities would be beneficial - Geographic information has been used to visualise on screen the relationship between the calls and reports of flooding that were being received in the 2008 floods. By integrating Ordnance Survey mapping into their emergency control room, staff at Caerphilly County Borough council's Emergency Planning team in the coordination of the response to the flooding identified potential problem areas and key council infrastructure that may have been at risk, including homes for the elderly, schools, community centres and so on with Caerphilly leisure centre identified as a rest centre – has this been taken into account?

Therefore at this juncture and based on the evidence provided - UNISON would advise against the closure of the café to be considered as a realistic saving proposal.

4) **Unison response to other Environment Directorate proposed savings**

Spoke to managers the reduction of the **100k for weed removal team** this will result in services being cut with the staff being realigned into other areas.

Toilet closures will impact down Building cleaning carry out at present could impact on staff which would reduce the casual staff with the perm staff being moved to positions being covered by the casuals at present.

Double shift mechanical sweepers, would require pattern of working 3 days on four off on a rota would be a change in terms and conditions but staff may like this idea may offer more flexibility.

Even though cuts have been identified, Comm & Leisure have a fleet replacement strategy and for the past 4 years have been purchasing new vehicles spending in excess of 600k each year. They are purchased via a revenue contribution to capital outlay. They have a budget of 600k to be able to do this, could a portion of this be used to remove some of the other cuts as the fleet is now quite young.

5) **GMB response to ENV 37 double shift working for mechanical sweeping**

The proposal for the reduction of the number of the mechanical sweepers and the double shift working pattern has brought a number of concerns to the Trade Unions attention from the staff who will be affected if this proposal is formally agreed by Cabinet on the 26th February 2014. Aside from the significant impact these proposals will have on the work life balance for all the staff concerned, the Trade Unions have the following points for consideration before any decision is made.

The predicted savings of 73K would be achieved by reducing the number of mechanical sweepers from 7 vehicles to just 4 vehicles of various sizes to cover the whole 1150k of road network within the Caerphilly County Borough. To accommodate the reduction in vehicle numbers and still maintain the cleanliness of the roads within the borough, staff would either need to extend their working hours or operate on a double shift working pattern, thus increasing the operating hours of the vehicles.

The Trade Unions would like to ask if the predicted savings of 73K has taken the following into consideration?

- 73K will be saved by reducing the number of vehicles leased, but has the additional running costs of the remaining vehicles operating over longer periods been deducted from this saving. IE: the additional fuel usage, general wear and tear of the vehicle, frequency of brushes needing replacement, frequency of tyres and brake pads needing replacement.
- Increasing operating hours of vehicles will push the vehicles to their limit. It is likely that breakdowns will occur much more frequently leading to the vehicles being off the road. Additional vehicles would need to be hired in at a cost to the authority to ensure that service levels are maintained thus reducing the estimated predicted savings. Currently the majority of repairs are carried out at the end of the working day (1pm). In approximately 95 % of cases the vehicles are back operational by 5am the following day resulting in no disruption to service. Longer working hours or double shifting will mean that the vehicles will have to have repair works carried out during shift hours, so either the workers will be non operational or additional vehicles will need to be hired in, again an additional cost to the authority. What are the costs for the repairs being carried out outside the normal working day and on weekends? Would the repair company charge a higher rate to be available during these times?
- The vehicles are also subject to a 6 week service check. This is currently undertaken after the shift is finished. Longer working hours or Double Shifting will now mean that this service check would need to be undertaken during operational hours again resulting in the vehicles and staff being non operational at a cost to the authority.
- Reducing the vehicle numbers to 4 and operating a double shifting pattern would also mean an additional driver would need to be employed as there are currently only 7. Has this additional cost also been taken into consideration when predicting the estimated savings?

If the proposal is accepted, then in the Trade Unions view complaints will increase from members of the public. Elected members will no doubt be aware that the residents of Caerphilly Borough are your constituents and you will be receiving their complaints. Sweepers will have to split their time to cover the whole borough resulting in areas being cleansed less frequently, this will no doubt lead to an increase in complaints received and the SLA response time would need to be reviewed.

Sweepers will be restricted to where they can operate during these increased hours. Residential streets will be out of bounds early mornings and during the evening due to the resident's vehicles being parked in the street making sweeping ineffective. Also the noise level of the mechanical sweeper will need to be considered during the increased operating hours so as not to disturb residents sleep during the early mornings and disrupting their relaxation time in the evenings. If rounds are reviewed to avoid residential areas during these times, where will they operate? It is also not viable to operate on main roads at these times, as this will cause congestion during the rush hour commute and inconvenience other road users as to be affective, the sweeper must operate, at a very slow speed.

The Trade Union strongly believes that before cabinet agree this proposal, further information should be sought from the department to clarify the exact savings, and how reducing the number of vehicles and double shifting the workers can be implemented effectively without reducing the service level standards and disrupting the operation.

Should the proposal be accepted by cabinet on the 26th February, then this would mean a significant change to the long standing working practises of the sweeper drivers, so before any changes to working arrangements are made for this group of staff, the Trade union would expect that a 12 week change of notice would be applied.

ENV 37 - Officer Response (Head of Community & Leisure Services)

Please see below response to the TU concerns: -

Para 2 - we will actually have 5 front line machines as the other machine already works shifts plus our 4 Pedestrian sweepers, which are available for footpaths and town centre cleansing. Drivers have been offered multiple shift/rota patterns designed to accommodate the savings and to try and maintain the current sweeping levels but we all have to accept that there may be some reduction in service levels (not just sweeping) to achieve the levels of savings required going forward.

Bullet 1 - the £73k savings are purely predicated on the reduction in hire costs of vehicles. When we hire vehicles it is for 7 days and there is no restriction on hours. All maintenance of machines is the responsibility of the hire company with us only responsible for damage or misuse. We have not offered up any savings from fuel, brush replacement etc. as we had always anticipated requiring this budget to operate the lesser number of vehicles on the additional shifts.

Bullet 2 - since we have adopted the rationale for hiring these specialist vehicles it has always been the responsibility of the hire company to either offer stand days when they are not available (non-payment of hire charges) or alternatively provide a free of charge replacement (which is what they normally do if they have a vehicle available) so no loss of service. With regards to out of hours maintenance/servicing it all depends on the shift pattern chosen as if they select a pattern where they finish prior to 6 pm then the garage is open until 8 pm for minor repairs but more significant issues will be reported to the Hire company who operate a 24 hour repair desk/call out system with mobile fitters, accepting there may be some delays or times when they cannot attend but in all fairness we do not have major issues with the 5 vehicles we currently have on shifts.

Bullet 3 - if the inspections cannot be undertaken by the Garage at the end of the shift (and as stated previously it may depend on the shifts being worked) then we will endeavour to ensure the hire company try and undertake as much work as possible out of hours or on employees rest days or (and this is the last resort) accept the loss of a couple of hours mechanical sweeping every 6 weeks for each machine as this is more than offset by the £73k savings. It is worth mentioning that staff will not be ineffective when vehicles are off the road as they could cover on any vehicles not being used or we ensure the transfer of personnel onto litter picking or other duties as we do at present.

Bullet 4 - the employment (or actually the transfer of an existing employee from litter picking duties so there would be no actual extra cost to the service other than a marginal increase in 1 employee's grade) is only an option if we adopt the early/ late shift system and as stated it is only an option which we do not have to exercise.

Para 4 - we are very aware of the potential increases in complaints but if we concentrate on the areas currently being cleansed at the times they are currently cleansed then hopefully we can keep them to a minimum.

Para 5 - as above we need to work with crews to ensure: Town centres are cleansed early, we avoid strategic routes during peak traffic flow time, we avoid schools at start finish times, concentrating on residential areas, interconnecting roads and strategic routes, industrial estates, cemeteries and parks during these times to minimise disruptions and potential for complaints although I think we all have to accept that as long as we are not acting illegally then we may have to accept more complaints as we push the boundaries by increasing our working hours for this and other services.

Para 7 - whilst we could accept a delay (if this is deemed necessary by Personnel) we need to be mindful that every month of 2014/15 we have not off-hired the vehicles will result in non-achievement of £6k of savings (3 months nearly £20k)

It is worth mentioning that our preferred option is a shift pattern of 4 days on and 4 days off which would allow sufficient time at the end of the shift to maintain machines and ensure we have vehicles on the road 7 days per week but we have accepted this is the least favoured option of the crews and that we would try and come to a more acceptable compromise. That being said we felt a compromise is far better than imposing a totally unacceptable option whilst accepting that these other alternatives really do add to some of the issues the TU's raise above e.g. less time at end of shift to maintain vehicles, less hours to carry out inspections, more likely to increase potential for complaints but I feel that we can manage these problems with the input and cooperation of the employees so we work together and try to and minimise these issues.

Caerphilly County Borough Council Budget Consultation 2013

Who was consulted, when and by what means

The consultation period ran from 22nd November to the 20th December 2013.

In total 773 questionnaires were completed of which, 64 were paper returns.

The consultation was publicised via social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) and through press releases to local newspapers. It was also featured in the November edition of Newsline - which is posted to every home and business in the county borough.

The main channel for consultation was an online survey via the CCBC Website but paper copies of the survey were made available on request.

In addition, the following groups were targeted:

The Caerphilly County Borough Viewpoint Panel

A letter was sent to every member of the Caerphilly County Borough Viewpoint Panel (at the time of this being written, that is 542 residents of the county borough) informing them that the consultation was available online or to request a paper copy of the survey if preferred.

Town and Community Councils

Details of the consultation were distributed to all Town and Community Councils via the Senior Committee Services Officer.

Youth Forum

A focus group was held with the Youth Forum on Tuesday 3rd December. Following this, two groups of young people completed the survey online.

50+ Forum

All 220 members of the 50+ forum were sent a paper copy of the survey for completion

Business Forum

An informative e-mail was sent to 1600 contacts via the Business Forum

Community Partnerships

Details of the consultation was distributed amongst the Community Partnership members

Deri Over 60s Group and the Fochriw Old Age Group

There was a request for paper surveys from a representative of the above groups

A summary of responses is attached.