

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET DECISIONS TUESDAY, 9 JULY 2019

TITLE: Financial and Service Planning 2020/21 to 2023/24

DECISION:

- i. The report was noted;
- ii. The need for pace and urgency, particularly in respect of 2020/21 was recognised;
- iii. The funding in relation to the ICT refresh was noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the report.

CONSULTATION: As set out in the report.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS: None declared

~~~~~

**TITLE: Fees and Charges and Income Strategy**

**DECISION:**

- i) the proposals outlined below were approved:

The established increase to apply generally in 2018/19 was based upon CPI and it is proposed to do the same again for 2019/20. The CPI rate in April 2019 was 2.1% and it proposed that it is the rate for any general fees and charges increases in 2019/20, with effect from 1st August 2019. This will not apply to any specific budget proposals that have already been agreed.

The residual base budget income target is £59,000 and applying the rate in 5.1 will yield £22,300 in 2019/20 but in a full year £33,500. The fees and charges included are mainly within the Resources and Chief Executives service areas.

The remaining small shortfall in a base budget sense will be derived from other income not currently allocated within the budget deriving from the introduction of the employee benefits scheme.

- ii) Next steps towards a more strategic approach are noted:

The weaknesses identified in the early part of this report still need to be addressed. Indeed the continuing difficult public sector funding environment makes it more relevant. It will be important that as a Council we have an approach to income generation that:

- o Is both strategic and whole authority;
- o explores opportunities for generating extra revenue;

- o considers subsidisation and makes considered decisions on levels;
- o develops an approach appropriate for Torfaen in terms of 'commercialisation';

This will put the Cabinet in the position of making informed and strategic decisions.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** As set out in the report

**CONSULTATION:** As set out in the report

**MEMBERS' INTERESTS:** None declared.

~~~~~

TITLE: Discretionary Rate Relief

DECISION:

Cabinet approved that the changes outlined below and the Council's discretionary rate relief policy is amended with effect from April 2020:

To review the scheme and make amendments where appropriate. Presently the scheme benefits all organisations that meet the criteria irrespective of their size. Organisations of an appropriate size would have the ability to properly incur any rates liability over the 80% it could be argued. At a national level there are a number of rate relief schemes affecting businesses up to a level of £50,000 rateable value.

It is suggested therefore that where the rateable value of the premises is £50,000 or more (excluding museums/schools) then there will be no entitlement to the 20% discretionary top for charities who benefit from 80% mandatory relief. Similarly, not for profit organisations who qualify in this category will be limited to 80% discretion.

The exceptions to this change would be in respect of museums and schools that qualify based upon rateable value but do not have the power to charge so will remain unaffected and benefit from 20% top up or 100% not for profit discretion.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the report.

CONSULTATION: As set out in the report.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS:

Cllr Richard Clark declared that he was a council appointed trustee of Torfaen voluntary alliance

Cllr Daniels declared that he was a trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Mount Pleasant Hall, Glenside Community Association and Pontrhydyrhyn Community Association.

Cllr Alan Jones declared that he was a trustee of Blaenavon Rugby Football Community Club

Cllr Cross declared that she was a Trustee of Torfaen Leisure Trust.

~~~~~

**TITLE: Delivering the requirement of the Environmental (Wales) Act 2016**  
**DECISION:**

Cabinet agreed to approve the Torfaen Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan (attached as Appendix 2 to the report.)

**REASON FOR DECISION:** As set out in the report.

**CONSULTATION:** As set out in report.

**MEMBERS' INTERESTS:** None declared.

~~~~~

TITLE: Future of Public Protection Services

DECISION:

Cabinet approved:

- 1) that the collaboration with Blaenau Gwent for the joint management of Public Protection Services will end on 31st November 2019; and
- 2) the creation of an in-house leadership model for Public Protection services.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the report.

CONSULTATION: As set out in the report.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS: None declared.

~~~~~

**TITLE: Low Cost Adaptations**

**DECISION:**

Cabinet approved to update the "Low Cost Grant" policy for all adaptation work costing between £1,000 and £5,000. This grant would be administered outside of the traditional DFG process.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** As set out in the report.

**CONSULTATION:** As set out in the report.

**MEMBERS' INTERESTS:** *Cllr Daniels declared a personal interest as he had an uncle who maybe eligible.*

~~~~~

CHALLENGE PROCESS

In accordance with section 5.10 of the Council's Constitution, the decision above may be implemented on or after Thursday 18th July 2019 (save where the provisions of 5.10.2 apply where implementation is required urgently).

Any challenges must be notified to the Chief Executive and the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer (and copied to the Senior Business Support Officer (Democratic Services)) by noon on Wednesday 17th July 2019.

Any such challenges received will be considered by the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which can do any of the following:

- Note the decision.
- Ask for further information including additional information on which the decision was based, background documentation and the reasons for the decision.
- Require the decision maker and any other Executive Member or Officer to attend committee to answer questions.
- Require the decision maker to reconsider any decision which has not been implemented.
- Record their comments on the decision.
- Make recommendations to the Cabinet, Executive Members, Planning Committee, Licensing Committee, Strategic Directors or Chief Officers of Service or Council in relation to the future handling of similar decisions.

Jacquelyn Tranter

Senior Business Support Officer (Democratic Services), 9th July 2019.