



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY, 2ND MARCH, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor M Davies (In the Chair)

Councillors H Barrett, C J Barry, R Braithwaite, S P Brown, B Carter, T Chaplin, E Galsworthy, D Isaac, A Jones, C T Jones, D Jones, G Jones, H R Jones, G Lewis, T Lewis, B E Mansbridge, L A Matthews, J McCarthy, K Moran, L Mytton, M O'Neill, D Roberts, S Slater, W R Smith, Raymond Thomas, Richard Thomas, B Toomey, C Tovey, P Williams and S Williams

Officers:

Carys Kennedy (Head of Legal and Governance Services - Monitoring Officer), Ellis Cooper (Deputy Chief Executive), Dorothy Haines (Chief Officer (Learning) - Chief Education Officer), Alyn Owen (Chief Officer (Community Regeneration)), Steve Jones (Head of Finance), Fran Donnelly (H R Manager), Mark Thomas (Head of Corporate Services) and Beth Melhuish (Corporate Communications Officer)

Mair Morgan (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
868	Apologies for Absence	No apologies for absence were received.
869	Declarations of Interest	No Declarations of Interest were made.
870	Budget Requirement and Council Tax 2017/18 – State of the Council Debate	State of the Council Debate – 2016/2017 Councillor B Toomey Leader of the Council gave the following address to the Council: The Budget for 2017/18 has once again been set in an

extremely challenging financial climate as a result of unrelenting and continued punitive measures imposed by Central UK Government.

Local Government in Wales is yet again faced with unprecedented funding reductions with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's funding for 2017/18 reduced by 0.5% or £446,000 in cash terms against a backdrop of rising inflation and additional burdens.

Despite this we continue to provide vital services and we have protected those in greatest need, all our departments do the very best they can under very difficult circumstances, and, in many cases are the envy of our colleagues across Wales, for example:

The Local Resilience Unit (Emergency Planning) has again been approached by Cardiff City Council and Welsh Government to help support the Planning and Preparing for the UEFA Champions League Finals Held in The Principality Stadium in June. This follows on from the good work undertaken by the Resilience Unit during the NATO Summit in 2014.

Working in collaboration with Welsh Government the Resilience Unit helped develop a Pan Wales Strategic Training package/ qualification back in 2016, this will be shortly delivered throughout the UK, as Best Practise.

The Council's Planning and Countryside Division continues to lead the way as the top performing planning authority in Wales. This has seen permission granted for the construction of a new bus station and public realm improvements at the former Police Station and Hollies Health Centre site.

The division also continues to support the leisure and tourism sector by granting permission for the construction of 23 additional mountain bike trails to support Bike Park Wales' further expansion plans, and redevelopment of Rock UK to provide short stay accommodation and conference facilities.

100 open market houses have been permitted across the County Borough over the last year, along with 50 affordable houses. The County Borough's rich heritage stock continues to be restored and conserved, with Listed Building Consent being granted at 115 High Street and St John's Church.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is the first Local Authority in Wales to use the Google Trekker Loan Programme following a successful bid by the Planning and Countryside department, which allows people to virtually view local landscape and heritage along trails and paths on Google Street View.

The Housing Renewal Team continues to attract significant inward investment for the benefit of Merthyr Tydfil citizens. In 2016/17, the Team secured £850,000 of inward

investment from a variety of sources to fund free external wall insulation and other energy efficiency measures to 90 homes located at Penybryn.

This year also marks the end of the Council's very successful Renewal Area Programme which has seen three Wards benefit from over £23M of direct grant investment from Welsh Government since 2001, which in turn stimulated a further £70M of additional investment through the Council, the private sector and our partner agencies. During the 16 year life of the programme more than 1000 homes benefited from repair and improvement works and more than 250 neighbourhood improvement schemes were completed.

Significant improvements have been made in Waste management in relation to achieving the Welsh Government Recovery and Landfill diversion targets.

In 2015/16 Merthyr Tydfil CBC provisionally exceeded the Welsh Government recovery target of 58% by attaining 61.58%.

This was almost a 10% increase on the previous year's recovery rate. Good progress has continued into 2016/17 with a projection of 64% to be achieved by the end of the year. If this level of performance is retained then the Welsh Government target for 2019/20 will be met three years earlier than required.

A £2m project to replace the expansion joints on the Fiddler's Elbow Viaduct, which was financed and delivered in collaboration with RCTCBC, was completed in December 2016.

Cyfarthfa Park is nearing the end of a major four-year redevelopment made possible by £3.1 million investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Welsh Government, CADW and the Council. Achieving Green Flag status was one of our long-term aims and this status was achieved in July 2016.

The presentation of a prestigious Green Flag Award to Cyfarthfa Park is a reward for the work carried out by the Council and Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust to further restore the historic facility.

From an Economic Development perspective, a range of Programmes are successfully being delivered across the County Borough.

The Economic Development Team has developed the 2016 – 18 Destination Management Plan, which sets out priorities for delivery, and will provide a blueprint for the next three years.

A key component and prominent program within Economic Development is the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme (VVP), a Welsh Government Regeneration Initiative that

allocated £12.8m to fund projects in Merthyr Tydfil from 2014 to 2017.

The Programme has been extremely successful and has created over 100 jobs, restored a number of historic buildings in the Town Centre, bringing them back into use, and created a number of residential units, both private and social.

In 2015/16 the outcomes for the children and young people of Merthyr Tydfil continued to rise for the fourth year in a row. For the first time pupils' performance is above the Welsh average at ages seven, 11 and 14 and while the gender gap was growing across Wales as a whole, it is narrowing in primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil.

The progress that pupils make from primary school to the end of secondary school continues to be significantly better than expected. The standards for those leaving school at 16 have also risen and performance in several indicators is above the national average. In the most important indicator, the Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics at A* to C), our 16 year olds have improved by over 21% since 2012, when the rest of Wales has improved by 9%.

We continue to prioritise education so that can meet our ambition of being amongst the top performing local authorities in Wales. By investing in our young people, we are investing in the future of Merthyr Tydfil.

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 was implemented in April 2016 and the changing practice, policy and service delivery required is progressing well and is being embraced locally and regionally.

One of the principles of the Act was to ensure that support is offered at the earliest opportunity and as a result Family First, Flying Start, Community First and Team-Around-the-Family are now under the Social Services directorate. In respect of this, a Tackling Poverty Strategic Group has been established and it is intended that a more efficient and effective use of resources can be developed to drive key priorities for the council and the poverty agenda.

Madam Mayor in conclusion I would like to thank all Members, Officers' and staff of the Authority for their continued support, particularly in such difficult times of decreasing finance, and for delivering high performing services for the citizens of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough.

Councillor B Toomey then referred the Council to the 'Budget Requirement and Council Tax 2017/18 – State of the Council Debate' report and moved the recommendations as contained within the report.

Resolved that:

- (a) The Council Tax increase of 2.9% for 2017/18 ('Band D' of £1,440.68) for the County Borough

		<p>Council be approved</p> <p>(b) The Budget Requirement of £114.795 million for 2017/18 (net revenue budget) be approved</p> <p>(c) The revisions to the Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 to 2020/21 in arriving at a projected budget deficit of £16.358 million for the period 2017/18 to 2010/21 be approved</p> <p>(d) The core funded Capital Programme of £25.938 million for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21 be approved</p> <p>(e) The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2017/18 be approved on the following basis:</p> <p>(i) Historic debt liability at 31 March 2007 – charged to revenue over 44 years by the straight line method</p> <p>(ii) Capital expenditure financed by borrowing from 1 April 2007 – charged to revenue by the asset life method</p> <p>(f) The Chief Finance Officer's comments relating to the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves be noted</p> <p>(g) The proposed reporting of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 to 2020/21 to Council on 22 March 2017 be noted</p>
871	Council Tax Resolution 2017/18	<p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(a) The formal Statutory Council Tax resolutions 2017/18 as outlined in Appendix 1 and summarised in Paragraph 5.1 of the report be noted and approved</p> <p>(b) The South Wales Police Authority approved precept for 2017/18 of £3,943,507 for the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council area be noted</p> <p>(c) The Bedlinog Community Council approved precept for 2017/18 of £20,500 for the Community Council area be noted</p> <p>(d) The Welsh Government 2017/18 Non Domestic Rate for Wales of 49.9 pence in the £ be noted</p>
872	To deal with any other urgent business or correspondence	<p>Goitre Primary School</p> <p>A Member advised the Council that at it's last ESTYN Inspection Goitre Primary School were judged as requiring significant improvement. ESTYN had now completed a monitoring Inspection and judged that they had made good progress and so they had taken them out of the category of concern. This was excellent news for the Gurnos and a credit to pupils and staff and the community.</p>
873	To receive communications from Her/His Worship the Mayor	<p>No Communications were received from Her Worship the Mayor.</p>