



Dinas a Sir Abertawe

Cofnodion Cyfarfod y Panel Perfformiad Craffu - Gwella Gwasanaethau a Chyllid

O bell drwy Microsoft Teams

Dydd Mercher, 20 Ionawr 2021 am 10.30 am

Yn Bresennol: Y Cyngorydd C A Holley (Cadeirydd) oedd yn llywyddu

Y Cyngorydd(wyr)

P M Black
L James
J W Jones
D W W Thomas

Y Cyngorydd(wyr)

P Downing
M H Jones
I E Mann

Y Cyngorydd(wyr)

P R Hood-Williams
P K Jones
B J Rowlands

Hefyd yn bresennol

Rob Stewart

(Arweinydd) Aelod y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Cyllid a Strategaeth

Swyddog(ion)

Emily-Jayne Davies
Michelle Roberts
Richard Rowlands
Ben Smith

Swyddog Craffu
Swyddog Craffu
Rheolwr yr Uned Cyflwyno Strategol
Prif Swyddog Cyllid / Swyddog Adran 151

Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

Dim

1 Datgeliadau o fuddiannau personol a rhagfarnol.

Ni ddatgelwyd unrhyw fuddiannau

2 Gwahardd Pleidleisiau Chwip a Datgan Chwipiau'r Pleidiau

Ni wnaethpwyd unrhyw ddatganiadau

3 Cofnodion.

Ystyriodd y Panel lythyrau a chofnodion o gyfarfodydd blaenorol a chytunwyd bod cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 14 Rhagfyr 2020 yn gofnod cywir o'r cyfarfod.

4 Cwestiynau gan y Cyhoedd

Ni ofynnwyd unrhyw gwestiynau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd

5 Cynigion y Gyllideb

Daeth y Prif Swyddog Cyllid a'r Cyfarwyddwr Adnoddau i'r cyfarfod i gyflwyno'r adroddiad ac ateb cwestiynau. Nodwyd y materion canlynol:

- Mae'r adroddiad yn ystyried cynlluniau tymor canolig a thymor hir (dros y 5 mlynedd nesaf).
- Ym mis Hydref 2020, cymeradwyodd y Cabinet Strategaeth Trawsnewid a Fframwaith Rhaglen newydd Abertawe sef Cyflawni'n Well Gyda'n Gilydd i gryfhau'r newidiadau sydd eu hangen yn awr wrth symud ymlaen o Strategaeth Abertawe Gynaliadwy.
- Yn dilyn y cynnydd ariannol a gafwyd gan Lywodraeth Cymru (£13m) a groesewir, rhagwelir y bydd pob cyfarwyddiaeth yn cael cynnydd cyffredinol mewn cyllidebau arian parod ar gyfer y flwyddyn nesaf o 3% o leiaf.
- Tynnodd y Prif Swyddog Cyllid sylw'r Panel at Dabl 1 – Gofyniad Buddsoddiad ac Arbedion Dangosol ar gyfer 2021/22 i 2025/26
- Mae Tabl 1 wedi'i fformatio'n wahanol i gynnwys y ffigurau. Rhaid canolbwyntio ar yr hyn sy'n cael ei dderbyn gymaint â'r hyn sy'n cael ei wario.
- Daeth tua £90m i mewn ac aeth £30m allan o wasanaethau dros ragdybiaethau cynllunio 5 mlynedd.
- Gwnaed rhagdybiaethau cynllunio ar gynnydd o hyd at 5% yn Nhreth y Cyngor, er na wnaed unrhyw benderfyniadau eto.
- Y setliad ar gyfer Abertawe yw 3.94% sy'n un cymedrol.
- Dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod cyllideb eleni yn gadarnhaol, o ystyried effeithiau'r pandemig.
- Nodwyd hwn fel yr ail setliad gorau a welwyd mewn 10 mlynedd gan Lywodraeth Cymru, gan ddarparu ar gyfer £13m o arian ychwanegol i'r cyngor.
- At ei gilydd, bydd buddsoddiad gwerth £22m net o arian ychwanegol i wasanaethau'r flwyddyn nesaf.
- Rhagwelir buddsoddiad o £60m net dros y 4 blynedd nesaf.
- Mae addysg ac ysgolion wedi bod yn flaenllaw yn yr ymateb i'r pandemig.
- Mae'r cyngor yn cynnig y buddsoddiad mwyaf erioed mewn gwasanaethau sy'n seiliedig ar Leoedd. Rhagor o fanylion i ddilyn ym mis Mawrth.
- Rhagdybiaethau a wnaed ar Dreth y Cyngor, gan nad yw'r sefyllfa'n hysbys eto – nid oes adolygiad cynhwysfawr o wariant gan Lywodraeth y DU felly mae'n anodd cynllunio ar gyfer y dyfodol. Mae Swyddogion ac Aelodau'n awyddus i'r Trysorlys adnewyddu hyn fel y gall gynllunio'n hyderus.
- Rhaglen gyfalaf – y buddsoddiad mwyaf erioed mewn ysgolion. Cyfleusterau newydd a gwell ar draws y sir yn datblygu'n gyflym er gwaethaf y pandemig.
- Siaradodd yr Arweinydd am fuddsoddiadau sylweddol a gwmpesir gan y Gronfa Ecwiti Cyfalaf eleni, heb unrhyw gost i'r trethdalwr.
- Holodd y Panel am yr arbedion arfaethedig yn y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol – pa mor hyderus yw'r cynllun hwn? Esboniodd swyddogion mai ein hymateb lleol fu agor dau gyfleuster ychwanegol i ehangu gallu a recriwtio staff newydd. Disgwylir cael y rhan fwyaf o'r gost hon yn ôl gan Lywodraeth Cymru.
- Ailadroddodd yr Arweinydd fod costau sy'n gysylltiedig â COVID yn cael eu cadw ar wahân i gostau gofal cymdeithasol beunyddiol. Mae'r adroddiad yn

- dangos sefyllfa well – mae'r cyngor yn hyderus y byddwn yn cyflawni'r arbedion hyn ac y byddwn mewn sefyllfa gyllidebol gytbwys (heblaw am gostau COVID).
- Mae'r cyngor bellach yn mynd ar drywydd ôl-ddyledion Treth y Cyngor, gan gofio effaith yr holl filiau ar breswylwyr/teuluoedd. Dywedodd yr Arweinydd nad yw wedi cymryd camau'n fwriadol i ychwanegu pwysau pellach; fodd bynnag, mae gennym hefyd rwymedigaeth gyfreithiol i fynd ar drywydd yr ôl-ddyledion hyn.
 - Incwm cyffredinol o barcio – mae swyddogion yn mynd ar drywydd adennill rhywfaint o'r costau hyn gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Yn y Gyfarwyddiaeth Lleuedd, ni wireddwyd bwllch o hyd at £10m o incwm. Rydym yn hyderus y byddwn yn derbyn y mwyafrif yn ôl.
 - Rhagwelir diffyg Treth y Cyngor o £4m yn y flwyddyn gyfredol. Pwysir ar Lywodraeth Cymru am rywfaint o ad-daliad.
 - Mae Tabl 1 yn nodi rhagdybiaethau ynghylch costau cynllun gostyngiadau Treth y Cyngor. Mae'n cynnwys cynnydd sylweddol yn y swm hwnnw, gan gydnabod pwysau economaidd gwirioneddol ar aelwydydd.
 - Cododd y Panel bryderon ynghylch unrhyw gynllun wrth gefn os nad ydym yn adennill costau. Esboniwyd y gellid defnyddio cronfeydd wrth gefn cyffredinol a'r rheini a glustnodwyd ond y byddent yn amharod iawn i beidio â mynd ar drywydd cael cymorth llawn gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn gyntaf. Rydym yn hyderus y byddwn yn cael y costau hynny'n ôl ac mae hawliadau'n dod i mewn dros gyfnod o dri mis.
 - Mae'r symiau a dderbyniwyd hyd yma'n dangos llwyddiant wrth adennill costau. Rydym yn gweld adferiad o 85% o leiaf ar eitemau lle rydym yn cystadlu yn erbyn cynghorau eraill.
 - Derbyniwyd £100m eleni mewn grantiau busnes a chymorth ad-dalu.
 - Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi clustnodi swm llai ar gyfer y flwyddyn nesaf i lywodraeth leol (£13m) er bod cyhoeddiadau pellach yn debygol. Mae peth rhagdybiaeth y bydd symiau pellach ar gael maes o law.
 - Gofynnodd yr Aelodau beth yw cyfran Abertawe o'r cyllid rhanbarthol mewn gwirionedd. Deallwyd y bydd adroddiadau cyllidebol ehangach ym mis Chwefror yn nodi'r ffigurau hyn.
 - 'Cyflawni'n Well Gyda'n Gilydd' – Holodd yr Aelodau am y newid hwn mewn strategaeth. Esboniodd swyddogion ein bod wedi dod i ddiwedd rhaglen 'Abertawe Gynaliadwy' ac mae angen i ni fabwysiadu cynllun ychydig yn wahanol yn awr.
 - Bydd y 'Pwerau Cymhwysedd Cyffredinol' newydd yn ein galluogi i fod yn uchelgeisiol yn ein strategaethau, gan gynnwys yr holl bartneriaid – y trydydd sector, cymunedau, y sector preifat, yr holl randdeiliaid sy'n cydweithio i gael Abertawe well.
 - Dyletswydd Economaidd-Gymdeithasol – cefnogi cymunedau ac ymgysylltu â hwy i sicrhau eu bod yn rhan o'r broses benderfynu. Rôl y cyngor yw arwain cymunedau a dod â nhw at ei gilydd.
 - Proses gyllidebol tymor byr – holodd y Panel am y broses ymgynghori cyhoeddus yma. Clywyd bod y broses yn unol â'r gofynion o dan ymgynghoriadau sector cyhoeddus. Bydd ymgynghoriad cyffredinol o ran sut mae pobl yn ystyried blaenoriaethau; nid oes unrhyw gynigion newydd helaeth nad ydynt eisoes ar gael i'r cyhoedd.

- Gofynnodd y panel pam y mae fformat Tabl 1 wedi newid. Esboniodd swyddogion fod y niferoedd sylfaenol fwy neu lai'r un peth. Mae'r fformat bellach yn cynnwys symiau sydd ar gael o gyllid allanol cyfansymiol. Bydd yn cyflwyno £90m o bwysau arfaethedig, wedi'i ariannu'n dechnegol; traean o Dreth y Cyngor, traean o gyllid allanol cyfansymiol, traean o gynilion.
- Tabl 1 – nid ychwanegir dim at gostau pensiwn am y ddwy flynedd nesaf. Clywodd y Panel am berfformiad gwych o ran enillion buddsoddi; gan osgoi gwerth miliynau o bunnoedd o bwysau (cronnol) yn dilyn hyn. Nid yw'r dystysgrif brisio gyfredol yn sicrhau unrhyw gynnydd mewn costau am 3 blynedd.

6 C2 Monitro'r Gyllideb 2020/21

- Aeth yr adroddiad gerbron y Cabinet ym mis Rhagfyr. Cylch adrodd ychydig yn hwyrach yn sgîl gwneud cais er mwyn adennill cyllid.
- A2.7 – mae'n nodi arian yn ôl ac ymlaen oddi wrth Lywodraeth Cymru. Grantiau heb eu gwarantu – daw rhywfaint o arian i mewn yn ddiweddarach, mae oedi cynwysedig o 3 mis.
- Crynodeb o'r gronfa wrth gefn A.3 – sylfaen o £3.6m yn y gronfa wrth gefn.
- A.4 – hyd at £10m o gronfeydd wrth gefn a glustnodwyd os oes angen.
- Adran gyfalaf - Mae'r ffigurau ar gyfer Lleuedd (y Gronfa Gyffredinol) yn cynnwys £20.46m o wariant ar gyfer Ysbyty Cynnydd Sydyn Stiwdio'r Bae.
- Atodiad A – erys y gyllideb yn gytbwys yn gyffredinol. Ni thynnwyd unrhyw arian o'r cronfeydd cyffredinol wrth gefn: y cyngor yw na ddylai'r rhain fynd yn is.
- Mae Prifysgol Caerdydd yn helpu i olrhain symudiadau arian.
- Mae Llywodraeth Cymru, dan bwerau datganoledig, wedi penderfynu dyrannu arian yn wahanol mewn gwahanol feysydd. Mae Cyngor Abertawe wedi cael addewidion cymorth sylweddol. Mae hyn yn arwain at y cynllun mwyaf hael o bob un o'r pedair gwlad yn y DU.
- Nid yw'r Cyngor yn gweinyddu'r holl gymorth – mae peth ohono'n mynd drwy lwybrau eraill, e.e. Busnes Cymru. Mae Llywodraeth Leol yn rhan o'r darlun ehangach yn unig.

7 C1 Adroddiad Monitro Perfformiad 2020/21

Cyflwynodd y Rheolwr Perfformiad Corfforaethol yr adroddiad i'r Aelodau. Nodwyd y materion canlynol:

- Mae paragraff 2.1-2.6 (T61) o'r adroddiad yn nodi'r cyd-destun ac yn tynnu sylw at natur ddigynsail y pandemig a'i effaith.
- Mae'r adroddiad ei hun yn hwyrach nag arfer, gan fod y broses adrodd wedi'i atal yn ystod mis Mawrth/Mehefin (canolbwyntio a dargyfeirio adnoddau i fannau eraill).
- Mae adrodd o'r fath wedi'i atal eto o dan y don ddiweddaraf o'r pandemig a phwysau dilynol ar staff.
- Mae'n debygol mai hwn fydd yr unig adroddiad perfformiad eleni. Yn yr un modd, ni osodwyd unrhyw dargedau ar gyfer 2020/21 oherwydd ansicrwydd y sefyllfa.

- T71 – Roedd 52% o'r dangosyddion wedi gwella neu wedi aros yr un peth â chyfnod tebyg y llynedd.
- Diogelu: Tudalen 72 – crynodeb o effaith COVID. Mae'r siart yn dangos bod 52% o ddangosyddion wedi gwella neu wedi aros yr un peth â chyfnod tebyg y llynedd.
- Gwasanaethau i Oedolion: Tudalen 74 (AS11) Derbyniodd mwy o oedolion 65+ oed gymorth. Cynnydd o 77% o'i gymharu â'r un cyfnod y llynedd.
- Gwasanaethau Plant: Tudalen 80 (CFS2) cafwyd cynnydd yn nifer y plant sy'n derbyn gofal.
- Tudalen 85, mesur 24 - dangosir bod llai o asesiadau plant wedi'u cwblhau o fewn y canllawiau statudol. Yr effaith ar allu'r gwasanaethau cymdeithasol i gyfarfod â theuluoedd a chwblhau asesiadau.
- Erys addysg yn flaenoriaeth ac yn bryder allweddol. Mae effaith diffyg presenoldeb yn sylweddol.
- Ni chyhoeddwyd unrhyw Ddatganiadau o Anghenion Addysgol terfynol oherwydd effaith COVID. Mae trefniadau amgen bellach ar waith.
- Nododd y Panel yr ymdrechion eithriadol gan staff, gan nodi bod llawer o ysgolion wedi aros ar agor a bod y gwaith a wnaed gan yr holl staff wedi bod yn eithriadol.
- Yr Economi ac Isadeiledd Tudalen 96 – Roedd y rhan fwyaf o'r dangosyddion wedi gwella neu wedi aros yr un peth â chyfnod tebyg y llynedd.
- Tudalen 99 - EP28: gostyngodd canran y ceisiadau cynllunio (perfformiad) bron 13% oherwydd effaith y pandemig.
- Holodd y Panel ynghylch EC2 – cymeradwyaeth ceisiadau cynllunio: Ai dyma'r ffordd gywir o adrodd am hyn? Mynegodd yr Aelodau bryderon ynghylch adrodd data yn y cyd-destun hwn, h.y. mae'n ymddangos bod perfformiad yn cael ei fesur yn erbyn nifer y cymeradwyaethau cadarnhaol.
- Trechu Tlodi, Tudalen 101 – mae'r graff yn dangos bod y rhan fwyaf o'r dangosyddion wedi gostwng. Tudalen 102/3 – mae'n dangos amserau prosesu hirach ar gyfer hawliadau gostyngiad Treth y Cyngor a hawliadau budd-dal tai newydd. Cynyddodd hawliadau o ganlyniad i'r cyfyngiadau symud.
- POV5 – mae'n dangos yr amhariad ar apeliadau. Gostyngodd budd-dal lles bron 10% o'i gymharu â'r un cyfnod y llynedd.
- Anallu i ddarparu hyfforddiant yn ystod y cyfyngiadau symud - gostyngodd nifer y cymwysterau achrededig a enillwyd gan oedolion gyda chymorth y cyngor.
- Trawsnewid / Cyngor y Dyfodol – roedd y rhan fwyaf o ddangosyddion wedi gwella neu aros yr un peth â chyfnod tebyg y llynedd.
- Ailgyfeiriwyd adnoddau er mwyn ymateb i COVID, gan gynnwys datblygiadau digidol.
- Tudalen 108 (CUST2a) Gostyngiad o 8% mewn taliadau ar-lein. Mae CUST2b yn dangos cynnydd mawr yn y defnydd o brosesau ar-lein, fel ceisiadau ailgylchu ar-lein. Mae'n dangos y newidiadau sydd eu hangen i ymateb i'r cyfyngiadau symud.
- Natur a Bioamrywiaeth – Tudalen 113: gostyngiad bach o 1.1% yn y gyfradd ailgylchu
- Gwerthfawrogiad ehangach o gael mynediad i fannau hamdden a gwyrdd.

- Soniodd yr arweinydd am sut roedd y staff wedi croesawu dyletswyddau ychwanegol wrth gynnal safonau, gan helpu i ddarparu gwasanaethau yn ystod cyfnod anodd iawn.

Camau Gweithredu:

- Hoffai'r Panel gael rhagor o wybodaeth am fonitro perfformiad ceisiadau cynllunio mawr (a chanddynt reidrwydd economaidd) a gymeradwyir. Holodd cynghorwyr a oedd hon yn ffordd briodol o fesur perfformiad o'r fath. Byddem yn croesawu'ch barn am y dangosydd hwn a sut y gellid cyflwyno'r data hwn yn well.

8 **Llythyrau**

9 **Cynllun Gwaith**



To:
Cllr Andrew Stevens
Cabinet Member for Business
Improvement and Performance

Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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8th February 2021

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement and Performance. The letter concerns the meeting held on 20th January 2021 and the Q1 Performance Monitoring Report 2020/21

Dear Councillor Stevens,

On the 20th January, the Panel met to discuss the Q1 Performance Monitoring Report 2020/21. The Panel are grateful to Richard Rowlands, Corporate Performance Manager, for attending to present the report. We also thank Adam Hill, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources for attendance at this meeting.

The Panel heard that Paragraph 2.1-2.6 (P61) of the report sets out the context and highlights the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and its impact. It was noted that the report itself is later than usual, due to suspension of reporting during March/June as focus and diversion of resources went elsewhere during the pandemic response.

Officers explained to the Panel that such reporting has again been suspended under the latest wave of the pandemic, and the subsequent pressures on staff and officer resources. The Panel understand that this is likely to be the only performance report this year, and, similarly, no targets have been set for 2020/21 due to the uncertainty of the pandemic situation.

The Panel heard, as reported on Page 72, a summary of the impact of the pandemic on safeguarding. The chart showed 52% of indicators improved or stayed the same as the comparable period last year.

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Officers explained that, as shown on Page 74 (AS11) more adults aged over 65 received support. This demonstrated an increase of 77% compared to the same period last year. Notable also was the increase in looked after children (Page 80, indicator CFS2).

The Panel heard that there had been fewer assessments of children completed within statutory guidelines, due to the impact on social services not being able to meet with families and complete assessments (Page 85, measure 24).

It was explained that Education remains a key priority. The Panel expressly noted the exceptional efforts of school/education staff, commenting that many schools remained open during difficult periods, and that the work done by all staff has been truly extraordinary. The Panel wished to express their admiration and respect for this continued hard work.

The Panel heard that under Economy and Infrastructure (Page 96) the majority of indicators improved or stayed the same as compared to the equivalent period last year.

The Panel discussed Page 99 (EP28) and that the (performance) percentage of planning applications had fallen by nearly 13% due to the impact of the pandemic. The Panel queried EC2, planning applications approval, and whether this was the correct context in which to report. Members raised concerns over reporting data from this perspective as it seemed that performance is being measured against the number of positive approvals. Members queried whether applications that were turned down would reflect negatively on the performance data. It was noted this data applied only in the context of planning applications with a major economic imperative.

Members heard that there had been an increase in longer processing times for Council Tax reduction claims and new housing benefit claims (Page 102/3), claims having increased as a consequence of the lockdown.

Officers explained how the report reflected changes in how the Council was responding to online requests. Page 108 (CUST2a) reported an 8% reduction in online payments and (CUST2b) shows large increases in the use of online processes, such as online recycling requests.

The Leader commented on how Council staff had embraced extra duties whilst maintaining high standards, helping to deliver services during very difficult times. The Panel also recognise this and are grateful for the continued efforts of staff across a broad range of services.

We note that current performance data will not provide the usual comparisons going forward, due to the continuing pandemic situation. We anticipate that due to the lack of current performance data, there will be no comparable data set for next year's performance indicators to be measured against. This is an issue the Panel will take into account during next year's discussions around this topic.

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter. We

would be grateful if you could please provide a written response to the following by 1st March 2021:

- 1) The Panel would like further information on the performance monitoring of major planning applications (with an economic imperative) that are approved. Councillors queried whether this was an appropriate way to measure such performance. We would welcome your views on this indicator and how this service might be better represented.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Chris Holley

Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk



To:
Cllr Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy,
Finance and Strategy

Please ask for:
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Date
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Overview & Scrutiny

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8th February 2021

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy. The letter concerns the meeting held on 20th January 2021 and the Budget proposals and the Q2 Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21

Dear Councillor Stewart,

On the 20th January, the Panel met to discuss the Budget proposals and the Q2 Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21. The Panel are grateful for your attendance and input at this meeting. We also thank Ben Smith, Section 151 Officer / Chief Finance Officer, and Adam Hill, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources for their attendance and contributions.

Budget Proposals

The Panel heard about the new Swansea Achieving Better Together Transformation Strategy and Programme Framework; Members queried this change in strategy. Officers explained that we have come to the end of the 'Sustainable Swansea' programme and we need to adopt a slightly different plan now. We also heard that the new 'General Powers of Competence' will allow us to be ambitious in our strategies, inclusive of all partners and all stakeholders working together for a better Swansea.

It was pleasing to hear that, following the welcome uplift in funding received from the Welsh Government (£13m), it is envisaged that all directorates will receive an overall increase in cash budgets for next year of at least 3%.

The Chief Finance Officer drew the Panel's attention to *Table 1* – Indicative Investment and Savings Requirement for 2021/22 to 2025/26. We heard that *Table 1* has been

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formatted differently to accommodate figures, the focus on what is going in as much as what is going out.

We understand that, for the purposes of planning, assumptions have been made on Council Tax increases of up to 5%, although we heard that no decisions have been made on this yet. It was noted that there is no comprehensive spending review from UK Government, meaning it is difficult to plan accordingly. Officers and Members are keen for this to be refreshed by the Treasury so we can plan with confidence.

Officers explained that the settlement for Swansea of 3.94% is average, noting this as the second best settlement seen in 10 years from Welsh Government, providing for £13m of additional cash into the Council. You also stated that this year's budget is positive, considering the impacts of the pandemic.

It was pleasing to hear your updates on the Capital Programme and the largest ever schools investment. The Panel heard that new improved facilities are being built across the County and this is progressing at speed despite the pandemic.

We queried the planned savings in Social Services and how confident we can be in this forecast. Officers explained that our local response has been to open two additional facilities to expand capacity and recruit new staff. It is expected that the Council recovers the majority of these costs from Welsh Government. You reiterated that Covid-related costs are being kept separate from day to day social care costs, the Council being confident that these savings will be achieved and result in a balanced budget position (Covid-associated costs aside).

We understand that the Council is now pursuing Council Tax arrears, being mindful of the impact of all bills on households. You explained to us that the Council has deliberately not taken action to add further pressure; however, there is also a legal obligation to pursue such arrears. We also heard that a Council Tax shortfall of £4m is anticipated in the current year and the Council is pressing Welsh Government for some reimbursement.

It was explained that the Council is pursuing some recovery of costs from Welsh Government, relating to general income from parking. In *Place* directorate, a gap of up to £10m of income has not been realised. Officers are confident we will receive the majority of this back in recovered funds.

We raised concerns over any contingency plan if we do not recover costs. It was explained that general and earmarked reserves could be called upon, but the Council would be very reluctant not to pursue the full support from Welsh Government initially. Officers seemed confident we will recover these costs and most claims are currently rolling in successfully over a three-month period.

We heard that £100m has been received (Swansea) this year in business grants and reimbursement support. Members queried what Swansea's share of the regional funding is in reality. It was understood that wider budget reports in February will indicate more precise figures and the Panel would like further information on these figures in due course.

The Panel raised concerns over the short-term budget process. Members queried the public consultation process here. It was explained that the process is in line with requirements under public sector consultation and that there will be a general consultation in terms of how people view priorities. There are no new large-scale proposals that are not already in the public domain.

Members raised queries over the figures in *Table 1* relating to pension costs, as nothing is added in for the next two years. The Chief Finance Officer explained about the prudent work of the team and the fantastic investment return performance; subsequently avoiding millions of pounds worth of (cumulative) pressures. It was pleasing to hear that the current valuation certificate assures no increase in costs for 3 years.

Q2 Budget Monitoring 2020/21

We heard that the report went to Cabinet in December; a slightly later reporting cycle due to bidding for recovery funding from Welsh Government.

We heard that, as set out in S2.7, monies move back and forth from Welsh Government and not all grants are guaranteed; some money comes in later and subsequently there is an in-built 3-month delay. It was noted that Cardiff University is helping to track movements of monies.

Officers explained that Welsh Government, under devolved powers, has decided to allocate money differently in different areas. Swansea Council has had significant pledges of support. It was heard that this results in the most generous scheme of all four nations in the UK. You highlighted that Swansea Council does not administer all the support; some goes through other avenues, e.g. Business Wales, and that Local Government is only part of the bigger picture.

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter, however, on this occasion, no written response is required.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Chris Holley
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