

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 5 MAY 2020

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, G Breeze, A W Davies, P Davies, J Evans, H Hulme and R Powell

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported.

3. BRIEFING TO CABINET ON BUSINESS CRITICAL ACTIVITIES

The Chief Executive explained that the business continuity plan had been invoked early in the pandemic which enabled the council to focus on business critical activities.

Cabinet received an update on the Council's business critical activities:

Responding to Covid-19

1. Health and Adult Services
2. Homelessness Service
3. Public Protection (enforcement, public health, Temporary Body Storage Facility)
4. Childcare Hubs and Early Years provision Key Workers and Vulnerable Children
5. Continuity of Learning Plans

Keeping our communities safe and resilient

6. Supporting Extremely Vulnerable residents
7. Support for Businesses
8. Refuse Collection
9. Emergency Housing repairs and maintenance
10. Highways – essential repair and emergency response
11. Children's Services – all services, including Safeguarding

Corporate – running the Council

12. Financial Management and Reporting
13. Corporate Support Services (including Customer Services, Communications, Workforce and ICT)

4.	INITIAL FINANCIAL IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2020/21 ARISING FROM THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC
-----------	--

Cabinet considered a report which provided an early indication of the potential impact the Covid 19 pandemic could have on for the Council's revenue budget for 2020/21. It was noted that it was difficult to accurately reflect the impact with any certainty. Things constantly change and the projections provided within the report would need to be updated regularly to reflect the rapidly moving situation.

This initial assessment indicated a total projected deficit for the first 3 months of £10.038 million due to additional demand on some services, loss of income and shortfall on the delivery of savings. Any shortfall against budget would be met from the Council's reserves with the General Fund Reserve and the Budget Management Reserve able to offset the anticipated shortfall for approximately 4 months. Other specific reserves could also be looked at but it was clear that the reserves held would not be sufficient to cover the potential deficit incurred by the Council should the current situation continue for a period of more than a few months.

Cabinet noted actions that needed to be explored to mitigate the financial loss to the council including the furloughing of staff, a review of cost reductions by Heads of Service, a freeze on expenditure other than business critical activities and a review of the capital programme and reserves.

It was important to note that discussions would continue with Welsh Government to highlight the financial position that Local Authorities now find themselves in. Ongoing discussions were taking place across Wales through forums such at the Society of Welsh Treasurers (SWT), the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Welsh Government (WG).

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport gave an update on the number of business grants. Out of 3629 forms received by end of the previous week, 98% had been processed and 92% paid. He also advised that revised nil bills would be sent out shortly to businesses eligible for the Retail Leisure and Hospitality Relief Scheme. This was a total of £10.5 million in relief for 1,260 Powys businesses.

The Leader closed the meeting by paying tribute to Sharon Scanlon a member of the Council's social care team based in Brecon who had died of suspected of Covid-19. She thanked the members and staff of the council for their work during the pandemic and she expressed her best wishes to County Councillor William Powell for his continued recovery.

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)