

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 6TH MARCH, 2023</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C. SMITH (PRESIDING MEMBER, CHAIRING)

Councillors C. Bainton
P. Baldwin
S. Behr
D. Bevan
M. Cross
H. Cunningham
D. Davies
G. A. Davies
M. Day
S. Edmunds
J. Gardner
J. Hill
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
G. Humphreys
E. Jones
R. Leadbeater
J. C. Morgan
L. Parsons
D. Rowberry
T. Smith
J. Thomas
S. Thomas
H. Trollope
J. Wilkins
D. Woods

AND: Interim Chief Executive
 Corporate Director of Education
 Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services
 Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
 Service Manager – Accountancy
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
 Communications & Marketing Manager

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Councillors K. Chaplin, J. Morgan, J.P., G. Thomas, D. Wilkshire and L. Winnett.</p>
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest were reported:</p> <p>Item No. 4: Revenue Budget 2023/2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillors J. Gardner, W. Hodgins, E. Jones, D. Rowberry, J. Thomas and H. Trollope.

The above-named Members remained in the meeting whilst this item of business was considered.

4. REVENUE BUDGET 2023/2024

Councillors J. Gardner, W. Hodgins, E. Jones, D. Rowberry, J. Thomas and H. Trollope declared an interest in this item but remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Leader of the Council referred to paragraph 2.2 of the report and advised that the final settlement now included a transfer of funding into the local government settlement, which related to Fire & Rescue Authority Pensions. The value of this grant amounted to £5.8m nationally across Wales and had increased Blaenau Gwent's final settlement to £139,730,490. Members were advised that the Council had previously agreed to passport the increase of £130,000 to the Fire & Rescue Authority, therefore, the Council's budget requirement had now increased from £178,034,276 to £178,164,692.

Consequently, changes would be required to some of the figures contained in the report, however, it was emphasised that this amendment would not change the Council's position in respect of the use of reserves or the increase in the council tax level.

Therefore, to reflect the increase in the final settlement the following amounts contained within the report would be amended as follows:

Paragraph 3.1.2 – this figure would now be amended to £178,164,692.

Paragraph 5.1.7 (a) – this figure would now read £178,164,692.

Paragraph 5.1.7 (c) – this figure would now read £139,730,490.

Paragraph 5.1.13 – the figure in the first sentence would be amended to read £178,164,692.

Paragraph 5.1.14 – the Revenue Support Grant figure would now be amended to read £117,692,418, increasing the total net revenue budget to £182,432,694.

It was, thereupon unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the:

- Council Tax Resolution detailed below, be approved.
- Statutory budget requirement of £178,164,692 detailed below, be approved.
- Use of the specific reserves identified totalling £4.26m (paragraph 5.1.16 of the report) be approved.

5.1.2 The Council agreed at its meeting on 23rd February 2023, a Council Tax increase of 3.45% for the 2023/2024 financial year. As a result, the Blaenau Gwent Council element of the full council tax charge would be:-

Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1,219.57	1,422.84	1,626.10	1,829.36	2,235.88	2,642.41	3,048.93	3,658.72	4,268.51

5.1.3 At its meeting in December 2022 the Council agreed the Council Tax base for tax setting purposes be 20,806.70 for 2023/24, this being the total number of chargeable dwellings in each area adjusted for a number of items e.g., discounts payable, multiplied by the assumed collection rate of 95%.

5.1.4 In addition, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

4,617.75	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,692.74	Brynmawr
2,698.63	Nantyglo & Blaina
4,737.20	Tredegar

5.1.5 The above representing the number of chargeable dwellings to which the Town & Community Council's precept would apply.

5.1.7 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2023/2024 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and sections 47 and 49 of the Local Government Act 1988 (as amended):

a	£178,164,692	Being the aggregate of the amounts the Council estimates for the items set out in section 32(2) (a) to (d) of the Act less the aggregate of the amounts the Council estimates for the items set out in section 32 (3) (a) and (c) of the Act calculates by the Council, in accordance with section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year
b	£208,000	Being the amount the Authority estimates in relation to Sections 47 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, for discretionary non-domestic rate relief.
c	£139,730,490	Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its Council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and additional grant.
d	£1,857.35	Being the amount at (a) above plus the amount at (b) above and less the amount at (c) above, all divided by the amount at 5.1.3 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
e	£582,331	Being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (Town and Community Precepts)
f	£1,829.36	Being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by the amount at 5.1.3 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

5.1.8 The amounts given by adding to the amount at (f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 5.1.3 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

g	1,891.94	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
	1,854.76	Brynmawr
	1,863.14	Nantyglo & Blaina
	1,862.96	Tredegar

5.1.9 The amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (f) and (g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands were:

The County Borough Tax including Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,261.29	1,471.51	1,681.73	1,891.94	2,312.37	2,732.80	3,153.23	3,783.88	4,414.53
Brynmawr	1,236.50	1,442.60	1,648.68	1,854.76	2,266.92	2,679.10	3,091.26	3,709.52	4,327.78
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,242.09	1,449.11	1,656.13	1,863.14	2,277.17	2,691.20	3,105.23	3,726.28	4,347.33
Tredegar	1,241.97	1,448.97	1,655.97	1,862.96	2,276.95	2,690.94	3,104.93	3,725.92	4,346.91
Ebbw Vale	1,219.57	1,422.84	1,626.10	1,829.36	2,235.88	2,642.41	3,048.93	3,658.72	4,268.51

5.1.10 That it be noted that for the year 2023/2024 the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner had stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council (totalling £6,752,190), in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown:

Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner								
Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
216.35	252.40	288.46	324.52	396.64	468.75	540.87	649.04	757.21

5.1.11 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (g) and 5.1.9 above, the Council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2023/24 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	The Full Tax of the County Borough Tax including Police and Community Precepts								
	Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,477.64	1,723.91	1,970.19	2,216.46	2,709.01	3,201.55	3,694.10	4,432.92	5,171.74
Brynmawr	1,452.85	1,695.00	1,937.14	2,179.28	2,663.56	3,147.85	3,632.13	4,358.56	5,084.99
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,458.44	1,701.51	1,944.59	2,187.66	2,673.81	3,159.95	3,646.10	4,375.32	5,104.54
Tredeggar	1,458.32	1,701.37	1,944.43	2,187.48	2,673.59	3,159.69	3,645.80	4,374.96	5,104.12
Ebbw Vale	1,435.92	1,675.24	1,914.56	2,153.88	2,632.52	3,111.16	3,589.80	4,307.76	5,025.72

5. CORPORATE FEES & CHARGES 2023/2024

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

It was noted that whilst an 8% inflationary increase to some fees and charges were being proposed as a consequence of the increased costs that the Council was experiencing, the Leader of the Council proposed that the following amendments to the fees and charges listed below be endorsed:

Social Services:

- Non-Residential Services – Home Care – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services – Day Care – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services – Direct Payments – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services - Part III Accommodation Charge (own provision) – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services – August House (own provision) – **2% increase.**
- Bert Denning Day Centre – Standard Baseline Fee – **4% increase.**
- Bert Denning Hydrotherapy Pool - Fee for OLA and private customers weekdays – **4% increase.**
- Bert Denning Hydrotherapy Pool – Fee for Weekend Use – **4% increase.**
- Flying Start Childcare - Non-Flying Start children childcare fees – **4% increase.**

Communications – C2BG Community Alarm & Telecare Service Charges:

- Monitoring fees- analogue lifeline with pendant- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Monitoring fees- Digital lifeline with sim card and pendant- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Monitoring fees- analogue lifeline with pendant with 5 additional sensors- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Monitoring fees- digital lifeline with pendant with 5 additional sensors- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Safety Package- (analogue) recommended by Social Worker- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Safety Package- (digital) recommended by Social Worker- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Initial Installation fees – **5% increase.**
- Further installation of additional sensors – **5% increase.**
- Installation of non-monitored equipment – **5% increase.**
- Replacement pendant – **5% increase.**

Community Meals:

- Meals on Wheels – Meal and dessert – **2% increase.**

Community Services – Waste:

- Bulky Waste Collection – **4% increase.**

Community Services – Cemeteries:

- Interment - New grave - Double Depth – **2% increase.**
- Interment - Re-open of grave – **2% increase.**
- Interment - Exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - New Grave (minimum depth) Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - Re-open of grave Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - Scattering of Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - Exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Garden of rest plots - Cremated remains (new grave) Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Garden of rest plots - Cremated remains (re-open) Ashes – **2% increase.**

- Garden of rest plots - Exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Erect memorial – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Additional inscription, replacement memorial – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Memorial still born baby (exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Renovation, clean and re-anchor memorial – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Small plaque – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Additional application for surround/memorial – **2% increase.**

Grounds – Grounds & Playing Fields - Matches:

- Grounds & playing fields training – **4% increase.**
- Fairs – **4% increase.**
- Carnivals/ Fetes – **4% increase.**
- Unauthorised use – **4% increase.**

Highways:

- Kerb drop initial inspection – **4% increase.**
- Temporary Road Closures for Events (non-charitable) – **4% increase.**

Technical Services – Education - School Meals:

- Adults (Staff & Student) Per Meal. Fee effective from September – **2% increase.**
- Children (Secondary & Primary) Secondary Age Child (Years 7 to 11). Fee effective from September. Fee per meal. And Primary Age Child (Nursery to Year 6). Fee effective from September. Fee per meal. – **2% increase.**

Economic Development:

- Commercial Bookings in Town Centres - Ebbw Vale, Tredegar, Blaina, Abertillery & Brynmawr Town Centres – **2% increase.**

Licensing:

- Licensing - Skin Piercing - Practitioner Registration – **4% increase.**

Public Health:

- Public Health - Food Safety Export Certificate – **4% increase.**

To reflect the above changes to the report, the Leader further proposed that an amended Option (3) be endorsed, namely:

Option 3

1. Members of the Council consider and approve the amended register of Fees & Charges for 2023/2024, and the core price increases relating to Aneurin Leisure Trust attached at Appendix 2.

2. Members approve delegated power and responsibility to the Interim Director of Social Services for setting the fees and charges for 2023/2024 relating to the provision of external social care.

This proposal was seconded.

RESOLVED accordingly.

It was, thereupon, unanimously,

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 3 be endorsed, namely:

- The amended register of Fees & Charges for 2023/2024 and the core price increases relating to Aneurin Leisure Trust attached at Appendix 2 be approved.
- Delegated power and responsibility be approved for the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services for the setting of fees and charges for 2023/2024 relating to the provision of external social care.

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