

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF  
THE COUNCIL**

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2024**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

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**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)**

Councillors J. Thomas (Vice-Chair)

E. Jones

J. Holt

J. Hill

R. Leadbeater

C. Smith

T. Smith

**Members without Voting Rights**

Councillors S. Behr

D. Bevan

M. Cross

K. Chaplin

H. Cunningham

D. Davies

G. Davies

M. Day

S. Edmunds

G. Humphreys

J. Gardner

W. Hodgins

J. Millard

Jen Morgan

L. Parsons

S. Thomas

H. Trollope

D. Wilkshire

L. Winnett

**WITH: Interim Chief Executive**

Interim Corporate Director Social Services  
 Chief Officer Resources  
 Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services  
 Corporate Director Education  
 Service Manager – Accountancy  
 Head of Organisational Development  
 Head of Governance, Partnerships & Democratic Services  
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance  
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer  
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic  
 Press and Communications Officer  
 Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>
<b>No. 1</b>	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
<b>No. 2</b>	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor G. Thomas.</p>
<b>No. 3</b>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>The following declarations of interest and dispensations were raised:-</p> <p>Councillor W. Hodgins - Item No. 5 (Revenue Budget 2024/2025)</p> <p>Councillor G. Davies - Item No. 5 (Revenue Budget 2024/2025)</p> <p>Councillor D. Wilkshire - Item No. 5 (Revenue Budget 2024/2025)</p> <p>Councillor J. Millard – Item No. 5 (Revenue Budget 2024/2025)</p>
<b>No. 4</b>	<b><u>DISCRETIONARY FEES &amp; CHARGES 2024/2025</u></b>

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

The Service Manager – Accountancy advised that the fees and charges for the Blaina ICC Room (Social Services) have been updated since the publication of the report. It was confirmed that the changes are as follows:-

- the large Meeting Room recommendation of £4.50 should read £5.77;
- the Caterpillar Room recommendation of £2.00 should read £3.59;
- the Ladybird Room recommendation of £1.50 should read £3.65;
- the Butterfly Room recommendation of £1.50 should read £3.70.

The Service Manager agreed to circulate an updated page following the meeting.

The Committee AGREED the report, subject to the foregoing and recommended to Cabinet and Council Option 2 as follows:-

- (1) the register of Fees & Charges for 2024/2025 attached at Appendix 1 and for discretionary fees & charges approved:-
  - (a) a fee uplift of 5% in line with the proposed business case as detailed in Appendix 4;
  - (b) the alternative fee proposed as detailed in paragraphs 5.1.4 to 5.1.14. of the report; and
  - (c) Planning Fees attached at Appendix 2.
- (2) approved delegated power and responsibility to the Interim Director of Social Services for setting the fees and charges for 2024/2025 relating to the provision of external social care as detailed in paragraph 5.1.6 of the report; and
- (3) approved the core price increases related to Aneurin Leisure Trust as detailed in Appendix 3.

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

The Committee AGREED and considered and recommended to Cabinet and Council Option 1 as follows:-

- 1) the 2024/25 revenue budget as shown in the table in paragraph 5.1.15 of the report;
  - 2) provided comments on the outcomes within the overall provisional RSG Settlement and noted the potential for further change in the Final RSG Settlement (paragraphs 2.6 – 2.17);
  - 3) provided comment on the outcomes within the BGCBC provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy (paragraphs 2.18 – 2.26);
  - 4) recommended to Cabinet and Council the updated cost pressures and growth items (£2.8m in total) identified in Appendix 2 for inclusion in the Council's budget;
  - 5) recommended to Cabinet and Council the Bridging the Gap proposals (a summary of which was attached at Appendix 3 and detailed Business Cases are attached at Appendix 4) delivering a minimum of £6.27m of financial efficiencies and budget cuts towards the budget gap (paragraphs 5.1.32 to 5.1.37);
  - 6) recommended to Cabinet and Council the level of funding provided to schools (paragraph 5.1.19-5.1.27);
  - 7) recommended to Cabinet and Council that any grant/s transferring into the Final Settlement for 2024/2025 be passported to the relevant service/s;
  - 8) recommended to Cabinet and Council the use of reserves up to £2.1m to balance the budget for 2024/2025 (paragraphs 5.1.38 to 5.1.42). The level would be subject to the recommendations in paragraph 3.1.5 and 3.1.6 above;
  - 9) recommended to Council, a Council Tax increase of a minimum of 5% for 2024/25 (paragraph 5.1.10) as per the Business Case CS12 (included in Appendix 3 and 4); and
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10)	Approved the updated MTFS for 2024/2025 to 2028/2029 attached at Appendix 5.
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