

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, 2024</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

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

Councillors P. Baldwin
S. Behr
D. Bevan
K. Chaplin
M. Cross
D. Davies
G. A. Davies
M. Day
S. Edmunds
J. Hill
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
G. Humphreys
E. Jones
R. Leadbeater
J. Millard
J. Morgan, J.P.
J. C. Morgan
L. Parsons
D. Rowberry
T. Smith
G. Thomas
S. Thomas
H. Trollope
J. Wilkins
D. Wilkshire
L. Winnett

AND: Interim Chief Executive
 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
 Press & Publicity Officer

<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 H. Cunningham, J. P. Morgan, J. Thomas and D. Woods.</p>
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest were reported:</p> <p>Item No. 5: The Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Wales) Act 2019; authorisation of Rent Smart Wales to undertake enforcement action in Blaenau Gwent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillors M. Cross and J. C. Morgan <p>The Monitoring Officer advised that the above-named Members could remain in the meeting whilst this item was considered and were able to take part in any debate that may ensue and any subsequent vote (if required) in respect of this item of business.</p>

4. REVENUE BUDGET 2024/2025

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

It was, thereupon unanimously,

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

- Council Tax Resolution detailed below, be approved.
- Statutory budget requirement of £184,942,156 be approved.
- Use of the specific reserves identified totalling £1.5m (paragraph 5.1.16 of the report) be approved.

5.1.2 The Council agreed at its meeting on 27th February, 2024, a Council Tax increase of 4.95% for the 2024/2025 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
1,279.94	1,493.26	1,706.59	1,919.91	2,346.56	2,773.20	3,199.85	3,839.82	4,479.79

5.1.3 At its meeting in December 2023 the Council agreed the Council Tax base for tax setting purposes be 20,936.36 for 2024/25, 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%.

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:

4,619.14	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,712.68	Brynmawr
2,711.88	Nantyglo & Blaina
4,761.60	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 2024/2025 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	£184,734,156	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	£144,044,000	Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates would be payable for the year into its Council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and additional grant.
d	£1,953.45	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	£702,229	Being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (Town and Community Precepts).
f	£1,919.91	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	2,002.42	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
	1,946.18	Brynmawr
	1,958.63	Nantyglo & Blaina
	1,955.84	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, was 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	1,334.95	1,557.43	1,779.93	2,002.42	2,447.41	2,892.38	3,337.37	4,004.84	4,672.31
Brynmawr	1,297.45	1,513.69	1,729.94	1,946.18	2,378.67	2,811.15	3,243.63	3,892.36	4,541.09
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,305.75	1,523.38	1,741.01	1,958.63	2,393.88	2,829.13	3,264.38	3,917.26	4,570.14
Tredegar	1,303.89	1,521.21	1,738.53	1,955.84	2,390.47	2,825.10	3,259.73	3,911.68	4,563.63
Ebbw Vale	1,279.94	1,493.26	1,706.59	1,919.91	2,346.56	2,773.20	3,199.85	3,839.82	4,479.79

5.1.10 That it be noted that for the year 2024/2025 the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner had stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council (totalling £7,317,677), 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
233.01	271.85	310.68	349.52	427.19	504.86	582.53	699.04	815.55

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 2024/25 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	1,567.96	1,829.28	2,090.61	2,351.94	2,874.60	3,397.24	3,919.90	4,703.88	5,487.86
Brynawr	1,530.46	1,785.54	2,040.62	2,295.70	2,805.86	3,316.01	3,826.16	4,591.40	5,356.64
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,538.76	1,795.23	2,051.69	2,308.15	2,821.07	3,333.99	3,846.91	4,616.30	5,385.69
Tredegar	1,536.90	1,793.06	2,049.21	2,305.36	2,817.66	3,329.96	3,842.26	4,610.72	5,379.18
Ebbw Vale	1,512.95	1,765.11	2,017.27	2,269.43	2,773.75	3,278.06	3,782.38	4,538.86	5,295.34

5. THE RENTING HOMES (FEES ETC.) (WALES) ACT 2019; AUTHORISATION OF RENT SMART WALES TO UNDERTAKE ENFORCEMENT ACTION IN BLAENAU GWENT

Councillor M. Cross and J. C. Morgan declared an interest in this item and remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.

The report of the Service Manager – Public Protection was submitted for consideration.

It was unanimously,

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that Cardiff Council, as the Single Licensing Authority for Wales (Rent Smart Wales) be authorised to exercise the functions of an enforcement authority, in relation to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's area, for the purposes of the Renting homes (Fees etc) (Wales) Act 2019, including, without limitation, taking enforcement activity and bringing criminal proceedings pursuant to section 19 of that Act.</p>
<p>----</p>	<p><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt item taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>COMMERCIAL BUSINESS CASE</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>The report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>Councillor J. Millard joined the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>The Chair of the Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee advised that the report had been considered at a Special Committee the previous day and Members in recognising the short timescale in which to progress the proposal had endorsed Option 2, subject to the following additional recommendation:</p>

- That delegated power be granted to officers to negotiate up to an agreed maximum value.

RESOLVED accordingly.

Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously,

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely:

- The opportunity highlighted in the business case be progressed;
and
- delegated power be granted to officers to negotiate up to an agreed maximum value.